



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

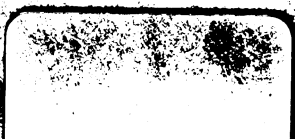
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

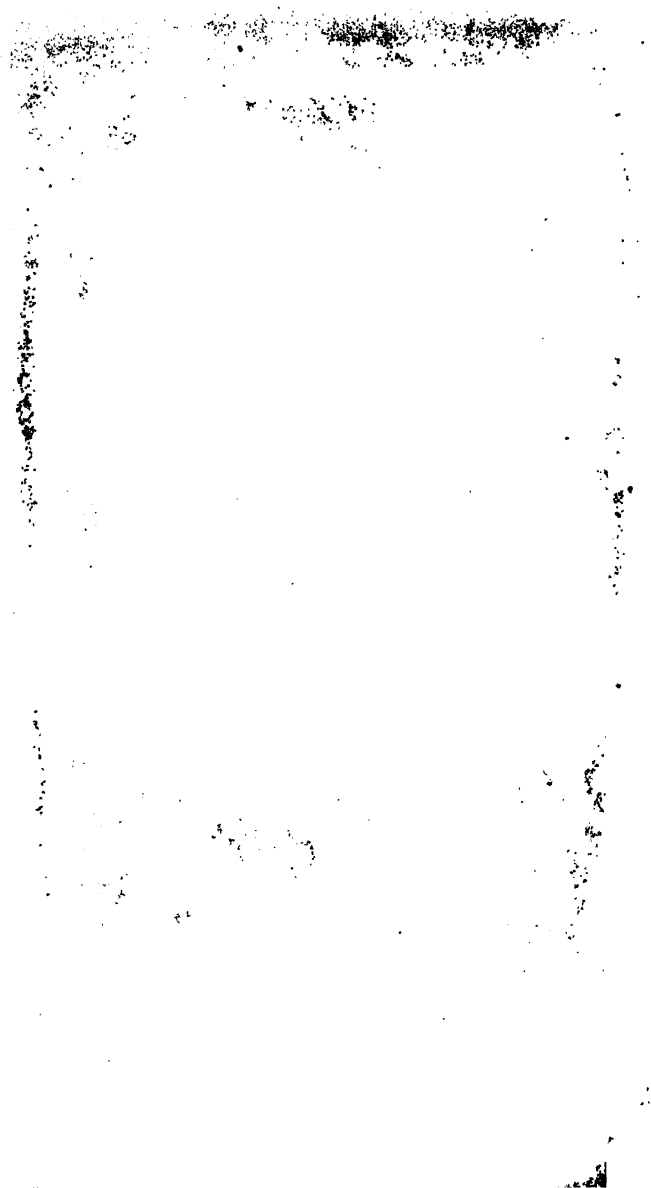
THE
Principles of Elocution

ARCHBISHOP WHATELY



6000740658





THE
PRINCIPLES OF ELOCUTION:

COMPILED FROM "THE ELEMENTS OF RHETORIC, BY
ARCHBISHOP WHATELY."

WITH
CONSIDERABLE ADDITIONS & ALTERATIONS,
Under the personal supervision of His Grace.

"NATORAM expelles furea, tamen usque recurret,
Et mala perrumpet furtim fastidia victrix."

Horace. Epist.



DUBLIN:
WILLIAM CURRY AND COMPANY,
Booksellers to the Queen.
9, UPPER SACKVILLE STREET.
LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL AND CO.

1854.

260. g. 135.

1

NOTICE TO THE READER.

THE present compilation, from that known and justly celebrated work, "The Elements of Rhetoric," by Archbishop Whately, has been made with the kind permission of the Author.

New matter has been introduced by the Archbishop, and the whole arranged, revised, and corrected under the personal inspection of His Grace.

That this little work may be of service, in exhibiting and impressing the true principles of Elocution, and so aiding the student to express his thoughts "*clearly, forcibly, and agreeably*," after a simple and "NATURAL MANNER," has been the desire and aim of the Compiler; who trusts, moreover, the reader may be induced to gain a deeper insight into this important branch of Rhetoric, by a careful study of Archbishop Whately's entire work.

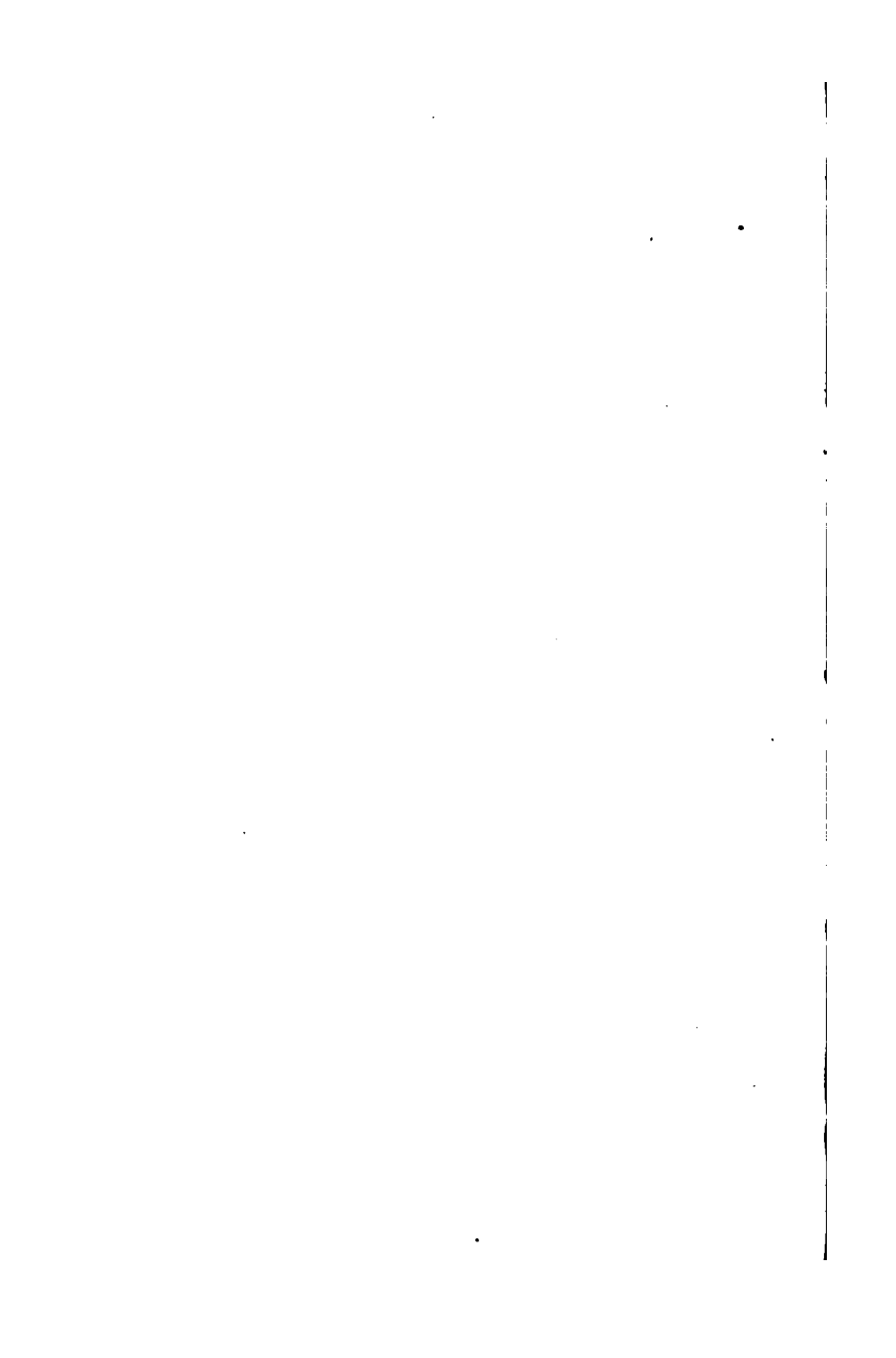
Dublin,

April 1, 1854.

CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION	Page. 1
CHAP. I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS RELATIVE TO ELOCUTION	3
CHAP. II. THE ARTIFICIAL AND NATURAL MODE OF ELOCUTION COMPARED	14
CHAP. III. CONSIDERATIONS ARISING FROM THE DIF- FERENCES BETWEEN READING AND SPEAKING	32
CHAP. IV. PRACTICAL DEDUCTIONS FROM THE FORE- GOING VIEWS	55
NOTES	74

_q The small letters in brackets, refer to the corresponding notes at the end of the Volume.



INTRODUCTION.

IT is evident that in its primary signification, Rhetoric,—as Archbishop Whately remarks in his “Elements”—had reference to public *speaking* alone, as its etymology implies. But as most of the rules for speaking are, of course, applicable equally to Writing, an extension of the term naturally took place; and we find even Aristotle, the earliest systematic writer on the subject, whose works have come down to us, including in his Treatise rules for such compositions, as were not intended to be publicly recited. And even as far as relates to speeches, properly so called, he takes, in the same Treatise, at one time, a wider, and at another, a more restricted view of the subject; including under the term Rhetoric in the opening of his work, nothing beyond the finding of topics of persuasion, as far as regards the *matter* of what is spoken; and afterwards, embracing the consideration of style, arrangement, and delivery.

Dr. Whately, in his work, adopts a middle course between these two extreme points, and treats of argumentative “composition,” *generally* and *exclusively*, considering Rhetoric, (in conformity with the very just and philosophical view of Aristotle,) as an off-shoot from Logic.

The Archbishop in this work, treats first and principally of the discovery of arguments, and their

arrangement; secondly, he lays down some rules respecting the excitement and management of what are commonly called the passions, (including every kind of Feeling, Sentiment, or Emotion,) with a view to the attainment of any object proposed, principally persuasion, in the strict sense, *i. e.* the influencing of the WILL, thirdly, he offers some remarks on STYLE, and fourthly, he treats of ELOCUTION. To this last branch of the subject the present selection is confined.

ELOCUTION.

Chapter I.

General considerations relative to Elocution.

§ 1.

ON the importance of Elocution, it is hardly necessary to offer any remark. Few need to be told that the effect of the most perfect composition may be entirely destroyed, even by a Delivery which does not render it unintelligible;—that one which is inferior both in matter and style may produce, if better spoken, a more powerful effect than another which surpasses it in both those points; and that even such an Elocution as does not spoil the effect of what is said, may yet fall far short of doing full justice to it. “What would you have said,”—observed *Æschines*, when his recital of his great rival’s celebrated Speech on the Crown was received with a burst of admiration,—“what would you have said, had you heard *him* speak it?”

The subject is far from having failed to engage attention. Of the prevailing deficiency of this,

more than of any other qualification of a perfect Orator, many have complained; and several have laboured to remove it: but it may safely be asserted, that their endeavours have been, at the very best, entirely unsuccessful. Probably not a single instance could be found of any one who has attained, by the study of any system of instruction that has hitherto appeared, a really good Delivery; but there are many,—probably nearly as many as have fully tried the experiment,—who have by this means been totally spoiled,—who have fallen irrecoverably into an affected style of (*a*) *spouting*, worse, in all respects, than their original mode of Delivery. Many, accordingly have, not unreasonably, conceived a disgust for the subject altogether; considering it hopeless that Elocution should be *taught* by any rules; and acquiescing in the conclusion that it is to be regarded as entirely a gift of nature, or an accidental acquirement of practice.

It is to counteract the prejudice which may result from these feelings, that I have thought it needful to profess in the outset a dissent from the principles generally adopted, and to lay claim to some degree of originality in my own. Novelty affords at least an opening for hope; and the only opening, when former attempts have met with total failure.

§ 2.

The requisites of Elocution correspond in great measure with those of Style: *Correct Enunciation*, in opposition both to *indistinct* utterance, and to *vulgar* and *provincial* pronunciation, may be considered as answering to Purity, Grammatical Propriety, and absence of Obsolete or otherwise *Unintelligible* words. These qualities, of Style, and of Elocution, being equally required in common conversation, do not fall within the proper province of Rhetoric. The three qualities, again, which have been treated of, under the head of Style,* viz. Perspicuity, Energy, and Elegance, may be regarded as equally requisites of Elocution; which, in order to be perfect, must convey the meaning *clearly, forcibly, and agreeably*.

Requisites
of Elocution

§ 3.

Before, however, I enter upon any separate examination of these requisites, it will be necessary to premise a few remarks on the distinction between the two branches of Delivery; viz., *Reading* aloud, and *Speaking*.

Reading and
Speaking.

The object of *correct* reading is, to convey to the hearers, through the medium of the ear, what is conveyed to the reader by the eye;—to put them in the same situation with him

* Elements of Rhetoric, Part III.

who has the book before him;—to exhibit to them, in short, by the voice, not only each word, but also all the stops, paragraphs, italic characters, notes of interrogation, &c. (*b*) which his sight presents to him. His voice seems to indicate to them, “thus and thus it is written in the book or manuscript before me.”

Impressive
reading.

Impressive reading superadds to this, some degree of adaptation of the tones of voice to the character of the subject, and of the style.

What is often termed *fine* Reading seems to convey, in addition to these, a kind of admonition to the hearers respecting the feelings which the composition ought to excite in them: it appears to say, “This deserves your admiration;—this is sublime;—this is pathetic, &c.”

Speaking.

But Speaking, *i. e.* *natural* speaking, when the Speaker is uttering his own sentiments, and is thinking exclusively of *them*, has something in it distinct from all this: it conveys, by the sounds which reach the ear, the idea, that what is said is the immediate effusion of the Speaker's own mind, which he is desirous of imparting to others. A decisive proof of which is, that if any one overhears the voice of another, to whom he is an utter stranger—suppose in the next room—without being able to catch the sense of what is said, he will hardly ever be for a moment at a loss to decide whether he is *Reading*

or *Speaking*; and this, though the hearer may not be one who has ever paid any critical attention to the various modulations of the human voice; so wide is the difference of the tones employed on these two occasions, be the subject what it may. (c)

The difference of effect produced is proportionably great: the personal *sympathy* felt towards one who appears to be delivering his own sentiments, is such, that it usually rivets the attention, even involuntarily, though to a discourse which appears hardly worthy of it. It is not easy for an auditor to fall asleep while he is hearing even perhaps feeble reasoning clothed in indifferent language, delivered extemporaneously, and in an unaffected style; whereas it is common for men to find a difficulty in keeping themselves awake, while listening even to a good dissertation, of the same length, or even shorter, on a subject, not uninteresting to them, when *read*, though with propriety, and not in a languid manner. And the thoughts, even of those not disposed to be drowsy, are apt to wander, unless they use an effort from time to time to prevent it; while, on the other hand, it is notoriously difficult to withdraw our attention, even from a trifling talker of whom we are weary, and to occupy the mind with reflections of its own.

Attention
connected
with Sym-
pathy.

Both reading and speaking, connected with Rhetoric.

Of the two branches of Elocution which have been just mentioned, it might at first sight appear as if one only, that of the Speaker, came under the province of Rhetoric. But it will be evident, on consideration, that both must be, to a certain extent, regarded as connected with our present subject; not merely because many of the same principles are applicable to both, but because any one who delivers (as is so commonly the case) a written composition of his own, may be reckoned as belonging to either class; as a Reader who is the author of what he reads, or as a Speaker who supplies the deficiency of his memory by writing. And again, in the (less common) case where a speaker is delivering without book, and from *memory* alone, a *written* composition, either his own or another's, though this cannot in strictness be called Reading, yet the tone of it will be very likely to resemble that of Reading. In the other case,—that where the author is actually reading his own composition,—he will be still more likely, notwithstanding its being his own, to approach, in the Delivery of it, to the Elocution of a Reader; and on the other hand, it is possible for him, even without actually deceiving the hearers into the belief that he is speaking extempore, to approach indefinitely near to that style.

The difficulty however of doing this, to one who has the writing actually before him, is considerable: and it is of course far greater when the composition is *not* his own. And as it is evident from what has been said, that this (as it may be called) Extemporaneous style of Elocution, is—in any case where it is not improper—much the more impressive, it becomes an interesting inquiry, how the difficulty in question may be best surmounted.

§ 4.

Little, if any, attention has been bestowed on this point by the writers on Elocution; the distinction above pointed out between Reading and Speaking, having seldom, or never, been precisely stated, and dwelt on. Several, however, have written elaborately on “good Reading,” or on Elocution, *generally*; and it is not to be denied, that some ingenious and (in themselves) valuable remarks have been thrown out relative to such qualities in Elocution as might be classed under the three heads I have laid down, of Perspicuity, Energy, and Elegance; but, there is one principle running through all their precepts, which being, according to my views, radically erroneous, must (if those views be correct) vitiate every system founded on it. The principle I mean is, Artificial style of Elocution.

that in order to acquire the best style of Delivery, it is requisite to fix the attention on the *voice*;—to study analytically the emphases, tones, pauses, degrees of loudness, &c., which give the proper effect to each passage that is well delivered—to frame *rules* founded on the observation of these—and then, in practice, deliberately and carefully to conform the utterance to these rules, so as to form a complete artificial system of Elocution.

That such a plan not only directs us into a circuitous and difficult path, towards an object which may be reached by a shorter and straighter, but also, in most instances, completely fails of that very object, and even produces, oftener than not, effects the very reverse of what is designed, is a doctrine for which it will be necessary to offer some reasons; especially as it is undeniable that system here reprobated, as employed in the case of *Elocution*, is precisely that recommended and taught in the Treatise before mentioned in respect of the conduct of *Arguments*.* By analyzing the best compositions, and observing what kinds of arguments, and what modes of arranging them, in each case, prove most successful, general rules have been framed, which an author is recommended studiously to observe in Composition: and this is precisely the procedure which, in Elocution, I deprecate.

* Elements of Rhetoric, Part I.

The reason for making such a difference in these two cases is this: whoever (*d*) appears to be attending to his own utterance, which will almost inevitably be the case with every one who is doing so, is sure to give offence, and to be censured for an affected delivery; because *every one is expected to attend exclusively to the proper object of the action* he is engaged in; which, in this case, is the expression of the thoughts—not the sound of the expressions. Whoever therefore learns, and endeavours to apply in practice, any artificial rules of Elocution, so as deliberately to modulate his voice conformably to the principles he has adopted (however just they may be in themselves), will hardly ever fail to betray his intention; which always gives offence when perceived. Arguments, on the contrary, *must* be deliberately framed. Whether any one's course of reasoning be sound and judicious, or not, it is necessary, and it is expected, that it should be the result of thought. No one, as Dr. Smith observes, is charged with affectation for giving his attention to the proper object of the action he is engaged in. As therefore the proper object of the Orator is to adduce convincing Arguments, and topics of Persuasion, there is nothing offensive in his appearing deliberately to aim at this object. He may indeed weaken the force of

Excellence
in matter
and in de-
livery to be
aimed at in
opposite
ways.

what is urged by *too great* an appearance of elaborate composition, or by exciting suspicion of rhetorical *trick*; but he is so far from being expected to pay no attention to the sense of what he says, that the most powerful argument would lose much of its force, if it were supposed to have been thrown out casually, and at random. *Here* therefore the employment of a regular system (if founded on just principles) can produce no such ill effect as in the case of Elocution: since the habitual attention which that implies, to the choice and arrangement of arguments, is such as *must* take place, at any rate; whether it be conducted on any settled principles or not. The only difference is, that he who proceeds on a correct system, will think and deliberate concerning the course of his Reasoning, to *better purpose*, than he who does not: he will do *well* and *easily*, what the other does ill, and with more labour. Both alike must bestow their attention on the *Matter* of what they say, if they would produce any effect; both are not only allowed, but expected to do so.

The two opposite modes of proceeding, therefore, which are recommended in respect of these two points (the Argument and the Delivery) are, in fact, both the result of the same circumstance; viz., that the speaker is expected to bestow his

whole attention on the proper business of his speech; which is, not the Elocution, but the matter. (e)

§ 5.

When, however, I protest against all artificial systems of Elocution, and all *direct* attention to Delivery, *at the time*, it must not be supposed that a *general* inattention to that point is recommended: or that the most perfect Elocution is to be attained by never thinking at all on the subject; though it may safely be affirmed that even this negative plan would succeed far better than a studied modulation. But it is evident that if any one wishes to *assume the Speaker* as far as possible, *i. e.*, to deliver a written composition with some degree of the manner and effect of one that is extemporaneous, he will have a considerable difficulty to surmount: since though this may be called, in a certain sense, the NATURAL MANNER, it is far from being what he will naturally, *i. e.*, *spontaneously*, fall into. It is by no means natural for any one to *read* as if he were *not* reading, but speaking. And again even when any one is reading what he does not wish to deliver as his own composition, as, for instance, a portion of the Scriptures or the Liturgy, it is evident that this may be done

Natural
style of
Elocution.

better or worse, in infinite degrees; and that though (according to the views here taken) a studied attention to the sounds uttered, at the time of uttering them, leads to an affected and offensive delivery, yet, on the other hand, an utterly careless reader cannot be a good one.

Chapter II.

Artificial and Natural Methods compared.

§ 1.

Reading.

WITH a view to Perspicuity then,—the first requisite in all Delivery, viz., that quality which makes the meaning fully understood by the hearers,—the great point is, that the Reader (to confine our attention for the present to that branch) should be perceived to *understand* what he reads. If the composition be, in itself, intelligible to the persons addressed, he will make them fully understand it, by so delivering it. But to this end, it is not enough that he should himself *actually* understand it: it is possible, notwithstanding, to read it as if he did not. And in like manner with a view to the quality, which has been here called Energy, it is not sufficient that he should himself feel, and be impressed

with the force of what he utters; he may, notwithstanding, deliver it as if he were unimpressed.

§ 2.

The remedy that has been commonly proposed Sheridan. for these defects, is to point out in such a work, for instance, as the Liturgy, *which* words ought to be marked as emphatic,—in what places the voice is to be suspended, raised, lowered, &c. One of the best writers on the subject, Sheridan, in his “Lectures on the Art of Reading,” (*f*) whose remarks on many points coincide with the principles here laid down, though he differs from me on the main question—as to the System to be practically followed with a view to the proposed object), adopted a peculiar set of marks for denoting the different pauses, emphases, &c., and applied these, with accompanying explanatory observations, to the greater part of the Liturgy, and to an Essay subjoined; (*g*) recommending that the habit should be formed of regulating the voice by his marks; and that afterwards readers should “write out such parts as they want to deliver properly, without any of the usual stops; and, after having considered them well, mark the pauses and emphases by the new signs which have been annexed to them, according to the best of their judgment,” &c.

To the adoption of any such artificial scheme there are three weighty objections; first, that the proposed system must necessarily be *imperfect*; secondly, that if it were perfect, it would be a *circuitous* path to the object in view; and thirdly, that even if both those objections were removed, the object would *not* be effectually obtained.

Imperfection of the artificial system.

First, such a system must necessarily be imperfect; because, though the *emphatic* word in each sentence may easily be pointed out in writing, no variety of marks that could be invented—not even musical Notation(*h*)—would suffice to indicate the different *tones* in which the different emphatic words should be pronounced; though on this depends frequently the whole force, and even sense of the expression. Take, as an instance, the words of Macbeth in the witches' cave, when he is addressed by one of the Spirits which they raise, "Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!" on which he exclaims, "Had I three ears I'd hear thee;" no one would dispute that the stress is to be laid on the word "three;" and thus much might be indicated to the reader's eye; but if he had nothing else to trust to, he might chance to deliver the passage in such a manner as to be utterly absurd; for it is possible to pronounce the emphatic word "three," in such

a tone as to indicate that "since he has but *two* ears he cannot hear." Again, the following passage, (Mark iv. 21,) "Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed," I have heard so pronounced as to imply that there is *no other alternative*: and yet the emphasis was laid on the right words. As a further example, "If one went to them from the *dead* they will repent," I have heard so read, though the emphasis was on the *right* word, only in a *wrong tone*, as to imply, *even* from the *dead*; *much more from the living*. Again, in the Nicene Creed, "By whom all things were made," the clause, if the voice be dropped, appears to belong to God the Father.

It would be moreover a task almost equally hopeless to attempt adequately to convey, by any written marks, precise directions as to the *rate*,—the degree of rapidity or slowness,—with which each sentence and clause should be delivered. Longer and shorter pauses may indeed be easily denoted; and marks may be used, similar to those in music, to indicate, generally, quick, slow, or moderate time; but it is evident that the variations which actually take place are infinite—far beyond what any marks could suggest; and that much of the force of what is said depends on the degree of rapidity with which

it is uttered; chiefly on the *relative* rapidity of one part in comparison of another. For instance, in such a sentence as the following, in one of the Psalms, which one may usually hear read at one uniform rate; "All men that see it shall say, This hath God done; for they shall perceive that it is his work;" the four words, "this hath God done," though monosyllables, ought to occupy very little less time in utterance than all the rest of the verse together.

Circuitous-
ness of the
artificial
system.

2ndly, But were it even possible to bring to the highest perfection the proposed system of marks, it would still be a circuitous road to the desired end. Suppose it could be completely indicated to the eye, in what tone each word and sentence should be pronounced according to the several occasions, the learner might ask, "But *why* should this tone suit the awful,—this, the pathetic,—this, the narrative style? *why* is this mode of delivery adopted for a command,—this, for an exhortation,—this, for a supplication?" &c. The only answer that could be given, is, that these tones, emphases, &c., are a part of the language;—that nature, or custom, which is a second nature, suggests spontaneously these different modes of giving expression to the different thoughts, feelings, and designs, which are present to the mind of any one who, without study, is

speaking in earnest his own sentiments. Then, if this be the case, why not leave nature to do her own work? Impress but the mind fully with the sentiments, &c. to be uttered; withdraw the attention from the sound, and fix it on the sense; and nature, or habit, will spontaneously suggest the proper delivery. That this will be the case, is not only true, but is the very supposition on which the artificial system proceeds; for it professes to teach the mode of delivery *naturally* adapted to each occasion. It is surely, therefore, a circuitous path that is proposed, when the learner is directed, first to consider how each passage ought to be read;—*i. e.* what mode of delivering each part of it would *spontaneously* occur to him, if he were attending exclusively to the *matter* of it (and *this* is what, it appears to me, should *alone* be studied, and most attentively studied);—then, to observe all the modulations, &c. of voice, which take place in such a delivery; then to note these down, by established marks, in writing; and, lastly, to pronounce according to these marks. This seems like recommending, for the purpose of raising the hand to the mouth, that he should first observe, when performing that action without thought of anything else, what muscles are contracted,—in what degrees,—and in what order; then, that he

should note down these observations; and lastly, that he should, in conformity with these notes, contract each muscle in due degree and in proper order; to the end that he may be enabled, after all, to—lift his hand to his mouth; which by supposition he had already done. Such instruction is like that bestowed by Moliere's pedantic tutor upon his *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, who was taught, to his infinite surprise and delight, what configurations of the mouth he employed in pronouncing the several letters of the alphabet, which he had been accustomed to utter all his life, without knowing how. (*j*)

Appearance
of affecta-
tion result-
ing from the
artificial
system.

3. Lastly, waiving both the above objections, if a person could learn thus to read and speak, as it were, *by note*, with the same fluency and accuracy as are attainable in the case of singing, still the desired object of a perfectly *natural* as well as correct Elocution, would never be in this way attained. The reader's attention being fixed on his own voice, (which in singing, and there only, is allowed and expected,) the inevitable consequence would be that he would betray more or less his studied and artificial Delivery; and would, in the same degree, manifest an offensive affectation.

It should be observed, however, that, in the reading of the Liturgy especially, so many gross

faults are become quite familiar to many, from what they are accustomed to hear, if not from their own practice, as to render it peculiarly difficult to unlearn, or even detect them; and as an aid towards the exposure of such faults, there may be great advantage in studying Sheridan's observations and directions respecting the delivery of it; provided care be taken, *in practice*, to keep clear of his faulty principle, by *withdrawing* the attention from the sound of the voice, as carefully as he recommends it to be *directed* to that point.

§ 3.

The practical rule then to be adopted, in conformity with the principles here maintained, is not only to pay no studied attention to the Voice, but studiously to *withdraw* the thoughts from it, and to dwell as intently as possible on the Sense, trusting to nature to suggest spontaneously the proper emphases and tones.

Natural
manner
how to be
secured.

Many persons are so far impressed with the truth of the doctrine here inculcated, as to acknowledge that "it is a great fault for a reader to be *too much* occupied with thoughts respecting his own voice;" and thus they think to steer a middle course between opposite extremes. But it should be remembered that this middle course

entirely nullifies the whole advantage proposed by the plan recommended. A reader is sure to pay *too much* attention to his voice, not only if he pays *any at all*, but if he does not strenuously *labour to withdraw* his attention from it altogether.

He who not only understands fully what he is reading, but is earnestly occupying his mind with the matter of it, will be likely to read as if he understood it; and thus to make others understand it; (*k*) and in like manner, with a view to the *impressiveness* of the delivery, he who not only feels it, but is exclusively absorbed with that feeling, will be likely to read as if he felt it, and to communicate the impression to his hearers. But this cannot be the case if he is occupied with the thought of what their opinion will be of his reading, and, how his voice ought to be regulated;—if, in short, he is thinking of *himself*, and, of course, in the same degree, abstracting his attention from that which ought to occupy it exclusively.

It is not, indeed, desirable, that in reading the Bible, for example, or anything which is not intended to appear as his own composition, he should deliver what are, avowedly, another's sentiments, in the same style, as if they were such as arose in his own mind; but it is desirable that

he should deliver them as if he were *reporting* another's sentiments, which were both fully understood, and felt in all their force by the reporter: and the only way to do this effectually,—with such modulations of voice, &c. as are suitable to each word and passage,—is to fix his mind earnestly on the *meaning*, and leave nature and habit to suggest the utterance.

§ 4.

Some may, perhaps, suppose that this amounts to the same thing as *taking no pains at all*; and if, with this impression, they attempt to try the experiment of a natural Delivery, their ill-success will probably lead them to censure the proposed method, for the failure resulting from their own mistake. In truth, it is far from a very easy task, to fix the attention on the meaning, in the manner and to the degree now proposed. The thoughts of one who is reading anything very familiar to him, are apt to wander to *other* subjects, though perhaps such as are connected with that which is before him. If, again, it be something new to him, he is apt (not indeed to wander to *another* subject, but) to get the start, as it were, of his readers, and to be thinking, while uttering each sentence, not of that, but of the sentence which comes next. And in both cases,

Difficulties
in the
natural
manner

if he is careful to avoid those faults, and is desirous of reading well, it is a matter of no small difficulty, and calls for a constant effort, to prevent the mind from wandering in another direction; viz., into thoughts respecting his own voice,—respecting the effect produced by each sound,—the approbation he hopes for from the hearers, &c. And this is the prevailing fault of those who are commonly said to take *great* pains in their reading; pains which will always be taken in vain with a view to the true object to be aimed at, as long as the effort is thus applied in a wrong direction. With a view, indeed, to a very different object, the approbation bestowed on the reading, this artificial delivery will often be more successful than the natural. Pompous spouting, and many other descriptions of unnatural tone and measured cadence, are frequently admired by many as excellent reading; which admiration is itself a proof that it is not deserved; for when the delivery is *really* good, the hearers (except any one who may deliberately set himself to observe and criticise) *never think about it*, but are exclusively occupied with the sense it conveys, and the feelings it excites.

Advantages
of imitation
precluded
by the adop-
tion of the

Still more to increase the difficulty of the method here recommended, (for it is no less wise than honest to take a fair view of difficulties,)

this circumstance is to be noticed, that he who is endeavouring to bring it into practice, is in a great degree precluded from the advantage of imitation. A person who hears and approves a good reader in the *Natural manner*, may, indeed, so far imitate him with advantage, as to adopt his plan, of fixing his attention on the matter, and not thinking about his voice; but this very plan, evidently, by its nature, precludes any further imitation; for if, while reading, he is thinking of copying the manner of his model, he will, for that very reason, be unlike that model; the main principle of the proposed method being, carefully to exclude every such thought. Whereas any artificial system may as easily be learned by imitation as the notes of a song.

Practice also (*i.e.* private practice for the sake of learning) is much more difficult in the proposed method; because, the rule being, to use such a delivery as is suited, not only to the matter of what is said, but also, of course, to the place and occasion, and this, not by any studied modulations, but according to the spontaneous suggestions of the matter, place, and occasion, to one whose mind is fully and exclusively occupied with these, it follows, that he who would practise this method in *private*, must, by a strong effort of a vivid imagination, figure to himself a

Advantage of practice less easily obtained by the adoption of the natural manner.

place and an occasion which are *not* present; otherwise, he will either be *thinking of his delivery*, (which is fatal to his proposed object,) or else will use a delivery suited to the situation in which he actually *is*, and not, to that for which he would prepare himself. Any system, on the contrary, of studied emphasis and regulation of the voice, may be learned in private practice, as easily as singing.

§ 5.

Importance
of practice
in Elocu-
tion.

It has been thought best, as has been above said, to state fairly the difficulties of a regular training in really good elocution; not, of course, with a view to discourage exertion for an object so important, but as a reason for labouring the more sedulously to overcome those difficulties.

In fact, nothing tends more to discourage assiduous study in this department, than the ill effect produced by the faulty methods commonly in use. For when it is found—as it too often will be—that those who have taken most pains in the study, acquit themselves even worse than those who have wholly neglected it, the natural result will be, that, instead of inquiring whether a better plan might not be adopted, men will be apt to sit down contented with the ordinary slovenly style of delivery, supposing that whatever

superiority any one may manifest is altogether a gift of nature

Accordingly, little or no care is usually taken, either in schools or in private families, to teach young persons to read well. What is called the "English Master" in most seminaries, is usually a person of very humble qualifications; and for the most part, either contents himself with making his pupils "mind their stops," or else teaches them an affected spout. And the consequence is, that, of men otherwise well-educated, a considerable number are found to have acquired an offensively artificial delivery, and a far greater number, a habit of reading as if they neither felt nor even understood what they read.

And even men of good sense and good taste, often acquire, through undesigned and unconscious *imitation*, an absurd style of reading those passages which they have been from infancy accustomed to hear ill-read by others. To the members of our Church accordingly, the difficulty of reading the *Liturgy* with spirit, or even with propriety, is greatly enhanced by the long established and inveterate faults to which almost every one's ears are become familiar; so that such a delivery as would shock any one of even moderate taste, in any other composition, he will, in this, be likely to tolerate, and to practise.

Unconscious
imitation o
what is
faulty.

Some, *e. g.* in the Litany, read, "have mercy *upon* us, miserable sinners;" and others, "have mercy upon *us*, miserable sinners;" both laying the stress on a wrong word, and making the pause in the wrong place, so as to disconnect "us" and "miserable sinners;" which the context requires us to combine. Every one, in expressing his own natural sentiments, would say, "have *mercy* upon us-miserable-sinners."

Many are apt even to commit so gross an error, as to lay the chief stress on the words which denote the *most important things*; without any consideration of the emphatic *word* of each sentence: *e. g.* in the Absolution, many read, "let us beseech him to grant us *true repentance*;" because, forsooth, "true repentance" is an important thing; not considering that, as it has been just mentioned, it is not the *new idea*, and that to which the attention should be directed by the emphasis; the sense being, that since God pardoneth *all* that *have* true repentance, therefore, we should "beseech Him to *grant* it to *us*."

In addition to the other difficulties of reading the Liturgy well, it should be mentioned, that prayer, thanksgiving, and the like, even when avowedly not of our own composition, should be delivered as (what in truth they ought to *be*) the genuine sentiments of our own minds at the mo-

ment of utterance; which is not the case with the Scriptures, or with anything else that is read, not professing to be the speaker's own composition.

But the department of education I am speaking of, instead of being entrusted to such persons as usually conduct it, is one which calls for the assiduous attention of some one well qualified in point of good taste and sound judgment. Let young persons be accustomed much to reading aloud to a parent or other teacher thus qualified, and who shall be ready to point out and correct any faults they may commit; and let this be done in strict conformity with the principles above laid down. Let the instructor, accordingly, remember that the pupils' attention is then, and then only, to be called to the *sounds* uttered, when the fault is one which he would wish corrected (and which indeed he should be ready to correct) in the utterance of *ordinary conversation*. *e. g.* many young persons have habits,—and such as, not seldom, grow up with them,—either of an indistinct pronunciation, which makes the vowels audible, while the *consonants* are slurred, (*l*) or of dropping the voice toward the close of each sentence so as to be nearly inaudible, or of rising into a scream, or of too rapid and hurried an utterance, or of some provincial

Different
modes of
teaching the
different
points of
good Elocu-
tion.

vulgarity, &c. All such faults should,—as has been said,—be corrected, not in reading only, but in ordinary speaking.

But on the other hand, all those faults of delivery, which, though common in reading, do not occur in ordinary speaking, constitute a distinct class, and must be carefully indeed corrected, but in a totally different manner. For hardly any one in ordinary conversation speaks as if he did not understand, or did not really mean, what he is saying. In reference, therefore, to *correct* reading (in respect of the sense), and *impressive* reading,—such as shall convey the true import, and full force, of what is said,—the appeal must be made to the learner's own mind; and his attention should be drawn *from* the sound, to the *sense* of what he is reading. And the instructor should give admonitions, when needed, not, as in the other case, by saying "You have pronounced that word wrong; pronounce it so and so:" or "You read too quick," &c.; but "Read that passage as if you understood it: read this suitably to a *command*, that, to an *interrogation*, &c.: express the scorn—the exultation—the earnestness, &c., of that passage, as if you were expressing such a feeling of your own in your own words," &c.

That such an exercise as this, under a judi-

cious guide, will have most beneficial results, I am convinced from experience. And if the study of Elocution, thus conducted, were made, as it manifestly ought to be, an indispensable part of a liberal education, I have no doubt that good reading would be no longer the exception, but the rule. For though the method I have been recommending, will not, as I have said, so readily and so easily accomplish its object, as the opposite method does its own object, on the other hand this latter is in reality no benefit at all, but a great evil; while, on the other plan, the student is at least put on the right course, and will be in the way of indefinitely improving himself in after life.

It is almost superfluous to remark, how utterly at variance with all that I have been here recommending, is the practice of setting children to learn by heart and recite, before they are able to understand, poems, chapters of the Bible, collects, &c., to which they attach little or no meaning, while they repeat the words by rote. A habit of reading in an artificial tone, offensive to those of good taste, and tending to impair the force of what is so read, is one natural result—though far from the worst(*m*)—of such a practice. If any who have been thus brought up are found, in after-life, to have a good elocution,—and, I may add,

Learning
by rote.

to have their intellectual and moral powers unimpaired,—this must be, not in consequence of such a training, but in spite of it.

Chapter III.

Considerations arising from the Differences between Reading and Speaking.

§ 1.

SOME additional objections to the method I have recommended, and some further remarks on the counterbalancing advantages of it, will be introduced presently, when I shall have first offered some observations on *Speaking*, and on that branch of Reading which the most nearly approaches to it.

When any one delivers a written composition, of which he is, or is supposed to profess himself, the author, he has peculiar difficulties to encounter, if his object be to approach as nearly as possible to the extemporaneous style. It is indeed impossible to produce the *full* effect of that style, while the audience are aware that the words he utters are before him : but he may approach indefinitely near to such an effect ; and in proportion as he succeeds in this object, the impression produced will be the greater.

It has been already remarked, how easy it is for the hearers to keep up their attention,—indeed, how difficult for them to withdraw it,—when they are addressed by one who is *really speaking* to them in a natural and earnest manner; though perhaps the discourse may be encumbered with a good deal of repetition, awkwardness of expression, and other faults, incident to extemporaneous language; and though it be prolonged for an hour or two, and yet contain no more matter than a good *writer* could have clearly expressed in a discourse of half an hour; which last, if read to them, would not, without some effort on their part, have so fully detained their attention. The advantage in point of style, arrangement, &c., of written, over extemporaneous discourses (such at least as any but the most accomplished orators can produce), is sufficiently evident: (*n*) and it is evident also that *other* advantages, such as have been just alluded to, belong to the latter. Which is to be preferred on each occasion, and by each orator, it does not belong to the present discussion to inquire; but it is evidently of the highest importance, to *combine*, as far as possible, in each case, the advantages of both.

Comparative advantages of written and extemporaneous addresses.

In order to impart to the delivery of a written discourse, something of the vivacity and interest-

ing effect of real, earnest, speaking, the plan to be pursued, conformably with the principles I have been maintaining, is, for the reader to draw off his mind as much as possible from the thought that he *is* reading, as well as from all thought respecting his own utterance;—to fix his mind as earnestly as possible on the *matter*, and to strive to adopt as his *own*, and as his *own at the moment* of utterance, every sentiment he delivers;—and to say it to the audience, in the manner which the occasion and subject spontaneously suggest to him who has abstracted his mind both from all consideration of *himself*, and from the consideration that he is reading.

§ 2.

Most men
speak well
in common
discourse.

The advantages of this NATURAL MANNER—*i.e.* the manner which one naturally falls into who is *really speaking*, in earnest, and with a mind *exclusively* intent on what he has to say—may be estimated from this consideration; that there are few (as was remarked in the preceding chapter) who do not *speak* so as to give effect to what they are saying. Some, indeed, do this much better than others. Some have, as I observed above, in ordinary conversation, an indistinct or incorrect pronunciation—an embarrassed and hesitating utterance, or a bad choice of

words: but hardly any one fails to deliver (when speaking earnestly) what he does say, so as to convey the sense and force of it, much more completely than even a good reader would, if those same words were written down and read. The latter might, indeed, be more *approved*; but that is not the present question; which is, concerning the *impression* made on the hearers' minds. It is not the polish of the blade that is to be considered, nor the grace with which it is brandished, but the keenness of the edge, and the weight of the stroke.

There is, indeed, as I have said, a wide difference between different men, in respect of the degrees of impressiveness with which, in earnest conversation, they deliver their sentiments; but it may safely be laid down, that he who delivers a written composition with the same degree of spirit and energy with which he would naturally speak on the same subject, has attained, not indeed, necessarily, *absolute* perfection, but the utmost excellence attainable by *him*. Any attempt to outdo his own Natural manner, will inevitably lead to something worse than failure.

On the contrary, it can hardly be denied that the Elocution of most readers, even when delivering their own compositions (suppose in the

Pulpit), is such as to convey the notion, at the very best, not that the preacher is expressing his own real sentiments, but that he is making known to his audience what is written in the book before him: and, whether the composition is professedly the reader's own or not, the usual mode of delivery, though grave and decent, is so remote from the energetic style of real Natural Speech, as to furnish, if one may so speak, a kind of running comment on all that is uttered, which says, "I do not mean, think, or feel, all this; I only mean to recite it with propriety and decorum:" and what is usually called *fine* Reading, only superadds to this (as has been above remarked), a kind of admonition to the hearers, that *they* ought to believe, to feel, and to admire, what is read.

§ 3.

Natural
manner not
to be con-
founded
with the
familiar.

It is easy to anticipate an objection which many will urge against, what they will call, a *colloquial* style of delivery; viz. that it is undignified, and unsuitable to the solemnity of a serious, and especially, of a religious discourse. The objection is founded on a mistake. Those who urge it, derive all their notions of a Natural Delivery from two, irrelevant, instances; that of ordinary *conversation*, the usual objects of which,

and consequently its usual tone, are comparatively light;—and, that of the coarse and extravagant *rant* of vulgar fanatical preachers. But to conclude that the objections against either of these styles, would apply to the Natural delivery of a man of sense and taste, speaking earnestly, on a serious subject, and on a solemn occasion,—or that he would *naturally* adopt, and is here advised to adopt, such a style as those objected to, is no less absurd than, if any one, being recommended to walk in a natural and unstudied manner, rather than in a dancing step, (to employ Dr. A. Smith's illustration,) or a formal march, should infer that the natural gait of a clown following the plough, or of a child in its gambols, were proposed as models to be imitated in walking across a room. Should any one, on being told that both tragic-acting and comic-acting ought to be a *natural representation* of man, interpret this to mean, that Tragedy ought to be performed *exactly like* Comedy, he would be thought very absurd, if he were supposed to be speaking seriously. It is evident, that what is *natural* in one case, or for one person, may be, in a different one, very unnatural. It would not be by any means natural to an educated and sober-minded man, to speak like an illiterate enthusiast; or to discourse on the most important

matters in the tone of familiar conversation respecting the trifling occurrences of the day. Any one who does but notice the style in which a man of ability, and of good choice of words, and utterance, delivers his sentiments in *private*, when he is, for instance, earnestly and seriously admonishing a friend,—defending the truths of religion,—or speaking on any other grave subject on which he is intent,—may easily observe how different his tone is from that of *light* and familiar conversation,—how far from deficient in the dignified seriousness which befits the case. Even a stranger to the language might guess that he was not engaged on any frivolous topic. And yet, when an opportunity occurs of observing how he delivers a written discourse, of his own composition, or perhaps the very same, or a similar subject, will it not often be perceived how comparatively stiff, languid, and unimpressive is the effect?

Natural manner is accommodated to the place, subject, and occasion.

It may be said indeed, that a sermon should not be delivered before a congregation assembled in a place of worship, in the same style as one would employ in conversing across a table, with equal seriousness on the same subject. This is undoubtedly true: and it is evident that it *has been implied* in what has here been said; the Natural manner having been described as accom-

modated, not only to the *subject*, but to the *place*, *occasion*, and all other circumstances; so that he who should preach exactly as if he were speaking in private, though with the utmost earnestness, on the same subject, would, so far, be *departing* from the genuine natural manner. But it may be safely asserted, that even *this* would be far the less fault of the two. He who appears, unmindful, indeed, of the place and occasion, but deeply impressed with the *subject*, and utterly forgetful of *himself*, would produce a much stronger effect than one, who, going into the opposite extreme, is, indeed, mindful of the place and the occasion, but not fully occupied with the subject, (though he may strive to *appear* so;) being partly engaged in thoughts respecting his own voice. The latter would, indeed, be the less likely to incur censure; but the other would produce the deeper impression.

The object, however, to be aimed at, (and it is not unattainable,) is to avoid *both* faults;—to keep the mind impressed both with the matter spoken, and with all the circumstances also of each case; so that the voice may spontaneously accommodate itself to *all*; carefully avoiding all studied modulations, and, in short, all thoughts of *self*; which, in proportion as they intrude, will not fail to diminish the effect.

§ 4.

A familiar
delivery one
species of
the natural.

It must be admitted, indeed, that the different kinds of Natural delivery of any one individual on different subjects and occasions, various as they are, do yet bear a much greater resemblance to each other, than any of them does to the Artificial style usually employed in reading; a proof of which is, that a person familiarly acquainted with the speaker, will seldom fail to *recognise his voice*, amidst all the variations of it, when he is *speaking* naturally and earnestly; though it will often happen that, if he have never before heard him *read*, he will be at a loss, when he happens accidentally to hear without seeing him, to know who it is that is reading; so widely does the artificial cadence and intonation differ in many points from the natural. And a consequence of this is, that the natural manner, however perfect,—however exactly accommodated to the subject, place, and occasion,—will, even when these are the most solemn, in some degree *remind* the hearers of the tone of conversation. Amidst all the differences that will exist, this one point of resemblance,—that of the delivery being unforced and unstudied,—will be likely, in some degree, to strike them. Those who are good judges will perceive at once, and the rest, after being a little accustomed to the Natural manner, that there is

not necessarily anything irreverent or indecorous in it; but that, on the contrary, it conveys the idea of the speaker's being deeply impressed with that which is his proper business. But, for a time, many will be disposed to find fault with such a kind of Elocution; and, in particular, to complain of its indicating a want of respect for the audience. Yet even while this disadvantage continues, a preacher of this kind may be assured that the *doctrine* he delivers is much more forcibly impressed, even on those who censure his style of delivering it, than it could be in the other way.

A discourse delivered in this style has been known to elicit the remark, from one of the lower orders, who had never been accustomed to anything of the kind, that "it was an excellent sermon, and it was a great pity it had not been *preached*:" a censure which ought to have been very satisfactory to the preacher. Had he employed a pompous spout, or modulated whine, it is probable such an auditor would have admired his *preaching*, but would have known and thought little or nothing about the *matter* of what was taught.

Which of the two objects ought to be preferred by a Christian Minister on Christian principles, is a question, not indeed hard to decide,

but foreign to the present discussion. It is important, however, to remark, that an Orator is bound, as such, not merely on moral, but (if such an expression may be used) on *rhetorical* principles, to be mainly, and indeed exclusively, intent on *carrying his point*; not, on gaining approbation, or even avoiding censure, except with a view to that point. He should, as it were, adopt as a motto, the reply of Themistocles to the Spartan commander, Eurybiades, who lifted his staff to chastise the earnestness with which his own opinion was controverted; "Strike, but hear me."

I would not, indeed, undertake to maintain (like Quintilian) that no one can be an Orator who is not a virtuous man; but there certainly is a kind of moral excellence implied in that renunciation of all effort after display,—in that forgetfulness of self,—which is absolutely necessary, both in the manner of writing, and in the delivery, to give the full force to what is said.

§ 5.

Besides the inconvenience just mentioned,—the censure, which the proposed style of Elocution will be liable to, from perhaps the majority of hearers, till they have become somewhat accustomed to it,—this circumstance also ought to be mentioned, as what many, perhaps, would

reckon (or at least feel) to be one of the disadvantages of it; that, after all, even when no disapprobation is incurred, no *praise* will be bestowed, (except by observant critics,) on a truly Natural delivery; on the contrary, the more perfect it is, the more will it withdraw, from itself, to the arguments and sentiments delivered, the attention of all but those who are studiously directing their view to the mode of utterance, with a design to criticise or to learn. The credit, on the contrary, of having a very fine elocution, is to be obtained at the expense also, inevitably, of much of the force of what is said.

Natural manner not praised.

§ 6.

One inconvenience, which will at first be experienced by a person who, after having been long accustomed to the Artificial delivery, begins to adopt the Natural, is, that he will be likely suddenly to feel an embarrassed, bashful, and, as it is frequently called, *nervous* sensation, to which he had before been comparatively a stranger. He will find himself in a new situation,—standing before his audience in a different character,—stripped, as it were, of the sheltering veil of a conventional and artificial delivery;—in short, delivering to them his thoughts, as one man *speaking* to other men; not, as before, merely

Bashfulness felt on first adopting the natural manner.

reading in public. And he will feel that he attracts a much greater share of their attention, not only by the novelty of a manner to which most congregations are a little accustomed, but also, (even supposing them to have been accustomed to extemporary discourses,) from their perceiving themselves to be personally *addressed*, and feeling that he is not merely reciting something *before* them, but saying it *to* them. The speaker and the hearers will thus be brought into a new and closer relation to each other: and the increased interest thus excited in the audience, will cause the Speaker to feel himself in a different situation,—in one which is a greater trial of his confidence, and which renders it more difficult than before to withdraw his attention from himself. It is hardly necessary to observe, that this very change of feelings experienced by the speaker, ought to convince him the more, if the causes of it (to which I have just alluded) be attentively considered, how much greater impression this manner is likely to produce. As he will be likely to feel much of the bashfulness which a really extemporary speaker has to struggle against, so, he may produce much of a similar effect. (o)

After all, however, the effect will never be completely the same. A composition delivered

from writing, and one actually extemporaneous, will always produce feelings, both in the hearer and the speaker, considerably different; even on the supposition of their being word for word the same, and delivered so exactly in the same tone, that by the ear alone no difference could be detected: still the audience will be differently affected, according to their knowledge that the words uttered are, or are not, written down and before the speaker's eyes. And the consciousness of this will produce a corresponding effect on the mind of the speaker. For were this not so, any one who, on any subject, can speak (as many can) fluently and correctly in private conversation, would find no greater difficulty in saying the same things before a large congregation, than in reading to them a written discourse.

§ 7.

And here it may be worth while briefly to inquire into the causes of that remarkable phenomenon, as it may justly be accounted, that a person who is able with facility to express his sentiments in private to a friend, in such language, and in such a manner, as would be perfectly suitable to a certain audience, yet finds it extremely difficult to address to that audience

Inquiry respecting the bashfulness felt in addressing a large audience,

the very same words, in the same manner, and is, in many instances, either completely struck dumb, or greatly embarrassed, when he attempts it. Most persons are so *familiar* with the fact, as hardly to have ever considered that it requires explanation, but attentive consideration shows it to be a very curious, as well as important one; and of which no explanation, as far as I know, has been attempted. It cannot be from any superior deference which the speaker thinks it right to feel for the judgment of the hearers; for it will often happen that the single friend, to whom he is able to speak fluently, shall be one whose good opinion he more values, and whose wisdom he is more disposed to look up to, than that of all the others together. The speaker may even feel that he himself has a decided and acknowledged superiority over every one of the audience; and that he should not be the least abashed in addressing any two or three of them, separately; yet still all of them, collectively, will often inspire him with a kind of dread.

Powerful
excitement
produced
in a large
audience.

Closely allied in its causes with the phenomenon I am considering, is that other curious fact, that the very same sentiments expressed in the same manner, will often have a far more powerful effect on a large audience, than they would have on any one or two of these very persons,

separately. That is in a great degree true of all men, which was said of the Athenians, that they were like sheep, of which a flock is more easily driven than a single one.

Another remarkable circumstance, connected with the foregoing, is the difference in respect of the style which is suitable, respectively, in addressing a multitude, and two or three even of the same persons. A much *bolder*, as well as a less accurate, kind of language is both allowable and advisable, in speaking to a considerable number; as Aristotle has remarked* in speaking of the *Graphic* and *Agonistic* styles,—the former, suited to the closet, the latter, to public speaking before a large assembly. And he ingeniously compares them to the different styles of painting; the greater the crowd, he says, the more distant is the view; so that in scene-painting, for instance, coarser and bolder touches are required, and the nice finish, which would delight a close spectator, would be lost. He does not, however, account for the phenomena in question.

Different language employed according to the number addressed.

§ 8.

The solution of them will be found by attention to a very curious complex play of sympathies which takes place in a large assembly, and,

The phenomena referred to reflex sympathy.

*Elements of Rhetoric, Book III.

(within certain limits), the more, in proportion to its numbers. First, it is to be observed that we are disposed to sympathise with any emotion which we believe to exist in the mind of any one present; and hence, if we are at the same time otherwise disposed to feel that emotion, such disposition is in consequence heightened. In the next place, we not only ourselves feel this tendency, but we are sensible that others do the same; and thus, we sympathise not only with the other emotions of the rest, but also with their sympathy towards us. Any emotion accordingly which we feel, is still further heightened by the knowledge that there are others present who not only feel the same, but feel it the more strongly in consequence of their sympathy with ourselves. Lastly, we are sensible that those around us sympathise not only with ourselves, but with each other also; and as we enter into this heightened feeling of theirs likewise, the stimulus to our own minds is thereby still further increased.

The case of the *Ludicrous* affords the most obvious illustration of these principles, from the circumstance that the effects produced are so open and palpable. If anything of this nature occurs, you are disposed, by the character of the thing itself, to laugh: but much more, if any

one else is known to be present whom you think likely to be diverted with it; even though that other should not know of your presence; but much more still, if he does know it; because you are then aware that sympathy with your emotion heightens his: and most of all will the disposition to laugh be increased, if many are present; because each is then aware that they all sympathise with each other, as well as with himself. It is hardly necessary to mention the exact correspondence of the fact with the above explanation. So important, in this case, is the operation of the causes here noticed, that hardly any one ever laughs when he is quite alone; or if he does, he will find on consideration, that it is from a *conception* of the presence of some companion whom he thinks likely to have been amused, had he been present, and to whom he thinks of describing, or repeating, what had diverted himself. Indeed, in other cases, as well as the one just instanced, almost every one is aware of the *infectious* nature of any emotion excited in a large assembly. It may be compared to the increase of sound by a number of echoes, or of light, by a number of mirrors; or to the blaze of a heap of firebrands, each of which would speedily have gone out if kindled

separately, but which, when thrown together, help to kindle each other.

The application of what has been said to the case before us is sufficiently obvious. In addressing a large assembly, you know that each of them sympathises both with your own anxiety to acquit yourself well, and also with the same feeling in the minds of the rest. You know also, that every slip you may be guilty of, that may tend to excite ridicule, pity, disgust, &c., makes the stronger impression on each of the hearers, from their mutual sympathy, and their consciousness of it. This augments your anxiety. Next, you know that each hearer, putting himself, mentally, in the speaker's place, (*p*) sympathises with this augmented anxiety: which is by this thought increased still further. And if you become at all embarrassed, the knowledge that there are so many to sympathise, not only with that embarrassment, but also with each other's feelings on the perception of it, heightens your confusion to the utmost. (*q*)

The same causes will account for a skilful orator's being able to rouse so much more easily, and more powerfully, the passions of a *multitude*; they inflame each other by mutual sympathy, and mutual consciousness of it. And hence it is

that a bolder kind of language is suitable to such an audience; a passage which, in the closet, might, just at the first glance, tend to excite awe, compassion, indignation, or any other such emotion, but which would on a moment's cool reflection, appear extravagant, may be very suitable for the *Agonistic* style; because, *before* that moment's reflection could take place in each hearer's mind, he would be aware that every one around him sympathised in that first emotion, which would thus become so much heightened as to preclude, in a great degree, the ingress of any counteracting sentiment.

If one could suppose such a case as that of a speaker, (himself aware of the circumstance,) addressing a multitude, each of whom believed himself to be the *sole* hearer, it is probable that little or no embarrassment would be felt, and a much more sober, calm, and finished style of language would be adopted.

And here it may be observed, incidentally, that a person of superior ability will often, through the operation of this reflex sympathy, operate powerfully on his own mind, in heightening some passion, or fortifying some prejudice of his own. He will act on others, who in turn will re-act on him.

The danger to a person of great ingenuity, of

being himself, unless carefully on his guard, misled by it,* has been already remarked on; since though it requires greater skill to mislead him than an ordinary man, he himself possesses that superior skill. It is no feeble blow that will destroy a giant; but if a giant resolves to kill himself, it is a giant that deals the blow. And then, the man of pre-eminent ability, has, in the supposed case, his *judgment* blinded by the very passion which calls forth all his argumentative skill. But in addition to this, such a man is qualified strongly to influence (whether in public speech or in private conversation) those whose abilities are inferior to his own; and they again, by adopting and sympathising with his passion and prejudice, heighten it in himself. He will, naturally, be disposed to overrate their judgment when it coincides with his own; and thence, to find himself confirmed in what he thinks and feels, by listening to what is, in fact, the echo of his own voice: and thus, what is in reality self-reliance, presents itself in the specious garb of modest deference for the opinion of others.

This accordingly is a danger which any man of superior talents should sedulously guard against in his intercourse with persons—the members,

* Vide Elements of Rhetoric, Part II., cap. i., § 2.

for instance, of his own family—who are his inferiors in ability.(r)

§ 9.

The impossibility of bringing the delivery of a written composition *completely* to a level with real extemporaneous speaking, (though, as has been said, it may approach indefinitely near to such an effect,) is explained on the same principle. Besides that the audience are more sure that the thoughts they hear expressed, are the genuine emanation of the *speaker's* mind at the moment,(s) their attention and interest are the more excited by their sympathy with one whom they perceive to be carried forward solely by his own unaided and unremitted efforts, without having any book to refer to; they view him as a swimmer supported by his own constant exertions; and in every such case, if the feat be well accomplished, the *surmounting of the difficulty* affords great gratification; especially to those who are conscious that they could not do the same. And one proof, that part of the pleasure conveyed does arise from this source, is, that as the spectators of an exhibition of supposed unusual skill in swimming, would instantly withdraw most of their interest and admiration, if they perceived that the

Sympathy with the extemporaneous Speaker in surmounting his difficulty.

performer was supported by corks, or the like; so would the feelings alter of the hearers of a supposed extemporaneous discourse, as soon as they should perceive, or even suspect, that the orator had it written down before him.

§ 10.

Remedy
proposed.

The way in which the respective inconveniences of both kinds of discourses may best be avoided, is evident from what has been already said. Let both the extemporary Speaker, and the Reader of his own compositions, study to avoid, as far as possible, all thoughts of *self*, earnestly fixing the mind on the matter of what is delivered; and the one will feel the less of that embarrassment which arises from the thought of what opinion the hearers will form of him; while the other will appear to be speaking, because he actually *will* be speaking, the sentiments, not indeed which at that time first *arise* in his own mind, but which are then really *present* to, and occupy his mind.

Chapter IV.

Practical Deductions from the foregoing views.

§ 1.

ONE of the consequences of the adoption of the mode of elocution here recommended, is, that he who endeavours to employ it will find a growing reluctance to the delivery, as his own, of any but his own compositions. Conclusions, indeed, and arguments he may freely borrow; but he will be led to compose his own discourses, from finding that he cannot deliver those of another to his own satisfaction, without laboriously studying them, as an actor does his part, so as to *make* them, in some measure, his own. And with this view, he will generally find it advisable to introduce many alterations in the expression, not with any thought of improving the style, *absolutely*, but only with a view to his *own delivery*. (t) And indeed, even his own previous compositions he will be led to alter almost as much, in point of expression, in order to accommodate them to the Natural manner of delivery. Much that would please in the closet,—much of the *Graphic* style described by Aristotle, will be laid aside for the *Agonistic*;—for a style somewhat more blunt and

Original compositions suitable to the natural delivery.

homely,—more simple, and, apparently, un-studied in its structure, and at the same time, more daringly energetic. And if again he is desirous of fitting his discourses for the press, he will find it expedient to reverse this process, and alter the style afresh. In many instances accordingly, the perusal of a manuscript sermon would afford, from the observation of its style, a tolerably good ground of conjecture as to the author's customary elocution. For instance, a *rapid* elocution suits the more full, and a slow one, the more concise style; and *great variations* in the degree of rapidity of delivery are suited to the corresponding variations in the style.

A mere *sermon-reader*, on the contrary, will avoid this inconvenience, and this labour; he will be able to deliver another's discourses nearly as well as his own; and may send his own to the press, without the necessity of any great preparation: but he will purchase these advantages at the expense of more than half the force which might have been given to the sentiments uttered. And he will have no right to complain that his discourses, though replete perhaps with good sense, learning, and eloquence, are received with languid apathy, or that many are seduced from their attendance on this teaching, by the empty rant of an illiterate fanatic. Much of these evils

must indeed be expected, after all, to remain: but he does not give himself a fair chance for diminishing them, unless he does justice to his own arguments, instructions, and exhortations, by *speaking* them, in the only effectual way, to the hearts of his hearers; that is, as uttered naturally *from* his own.

I have seen somewhere an anecdote of some celebrated actor being asked by a divine, "How is it that people listen with so much emotion to what you say, which they know to be all fictitious, besides that it would be no concern of theirs, even if true; while they hear with comparative apathy, from us, truths the most sublime, and the most important to them?" The answer was, "Because we deliver fiction like truth, and you deliver truth like fiction."

The principles here laid down may help to explain a remarkable fact, which is usually attributed to other than the true causes. The powerful effects often produced by some fanatical preachers, not superior in pious and sincere zeal, and inferior in learning, in good sense, and in taste, to men who are listened to with comparative apathy, are frequently considered as a proof of superior *eloquence*; though an eloquence tarnished by barbarism, and extravagant mannerism. Now may not such effects result, not

Effects of
rant ac-
counted for.

from any superior powers in the preacher, but merely from the intrinsic beauty and sublimity, and the measureless importance of the *subject*? But why then, it may be replied, does not the other preacher, whose subject is the very *same*, produce the same effect? The answer is, because he is but *half-attended to*. The ordinary measured cadence of reading, is not only in itself dull, but is what men are *familiarly* accustomed to: religion itself also, is a subject so *familiar*, in a certain sense, (familiar, that is, to the *ear*,) as to be *trite*, even to those who *know* and *think* little about it. Let but the attention be thoroughly roused, and intently fixed on such a stupendous subject, and that *subject* itself will produce the most overpowering emotion. And not only unaffected earnestness of manner, but, perhaps, even still more, any uncouth oddity, and even ridiculous extravagance, will, by the stimulus of *novelty*, have the effect of thus rousing the hearers from their ordinary lethargy. So that a preacher of little or no real eloquence, will sometimes, *on such a subject*, produce the effects of the greatest eloquence, by merely forcing the hearers (often, even by the excessively glaring *faults* of his style and delivery) to *attend*, to a subject which no one can *really* attend to unmoved.

It will not, of course, be supposed that my intention is to *recommend* the adoption of extravagant rant. The good effects which it undoubtedly does sometimes produce, incidentally, on some, are more than counterbalanced by the mischievous consequences to others.

§ 2.

One important practical maxim resulting from the views here taken, is the decided condemnation of all *recitation of speeches* by school-boys; a practice so much approved and recommended by many, with a view to preparing youths for Public Speaking in after-life. It is to be condemned, however, (supposing the foregoing principle correct,) not as useless merely, but absolutely pernicious, with a view to that object. The *justness*, indeed, of this opinion will, doubtless, be disputed; but its *consistency* with the plan I have been recommending, is almost too obvious to be insisted on. In any one who should think a *natural* delivery desirable, it would be an obvious absurdity to think of attaining it by practising that which is the most completely artificial. If there is, as is evident, much difficulty to be surmounted, even by one who is delivering, on a serious occasion, his own composition, before he can completely succeed in ab-

Practice of
recitation at
schools in-
jurious.

stracting his mind from all thoughts of his own voice,—of the judgment of the audience on his performance, &c., and in fixing it on the Matter, Occasion, and Place,—on every circumstance which *ought* to give the character to his elocution,—how much must this difficulty be enhanced, when neither the sentiments he is to utter, nor the character he is to assume, are his own, or even supposed to be so, or anywise connected with him;—when neither the place, the occasion, nor the audience, which are *actually present*, have anything to do with the substance of what is said! It is therefore almost inevitable, that he will studiously form to himself an *artificial* manner; (*u*) which (especially if he succeed in it) will probably cling to him through life, even when he is delivering his own compositions on real occasions. The very best that can be expected, is, that he should become an accomplished *actor*,—possessing the *plastic* power of putting himself, in imagination, so completely into the situation of him whom he personates, and of adopting for the moment, so perfectly, all the sentiments and views of that character, as to express himself exactly as such a person would have done, in the supposed situation. Few are likely to attain such perfection; but he who shall have succeeded in accomplishing this, will have

taken a most circuitous route to his proposed object, if that object be, not to qualify himself for the Stage, but to be able impressively to deliver in public, on real, and important occasions, his own sentiments. He will have been carefully learning to *assume*, what, when the real occasion occurs, need not be assumed, but only *expressed*. Nothing surely can be more preposterous than labouring to acquire the art of *pretending* to be, what he is *not*, and, to feel, what he does not, in order that he may be enabled, on a real emergency, to *pretend* to be and to feel just what the occasion requires and suggests: in short, to *personate himself*.

The Barmecide, in the *Arabian Nights*, who amused himself by setting down his guest to an imaginary feast, and trying his skill in imitating, at an empty table, the actions of eating and drinking, did not propose this as an advisable mode of instructing him how to perform those actions in reality.

Let all studied recitation therefore,—every kind of speaking which from its nature must necessarily be artificial,—be carefully avoided, by one whose object is to attain the only truly impressive,—the Natural Delivery.

It should be observed, that the censure here pronounced on school-recitations, and all exer-

Acting of
plays by
School-boys

cises of the like nature, relates, exclusively, to the effect produced on the style of *Elocution*.

With any other objects that may be proposed, the present work has, obviously, no concern.

Nor can it be doubted that a familiarity with the purest forms of the Latin and Greek languages, may be greatly promoted by committing to memory, and studying, not only to understand, but to recite with propriety, the best orations and plays in those languages. The familiar knowledge, too, and temporary adoption of the characters and sentiments, can hardly fail to produce a powerful effect on the moral character. If the *spectators* of a play which strongly interests them are in any degree disposed (as the Poet expresses it) to "live o'er each scene, and be what they behold," much more may this be expected in the *actor*, who studies to give the fullest effect to his performance, by fancying himself, as far as possible, the person he represents. (*v*) But let no one seek to attain a natural, simple, and forcible *Elocution*, by a practice which, the more he applies to it, will carry him still the farther from the object he aims at.

What has been said may perhaps be considered by some as applicable only in the case where the design is merely to qualify a man for extemporaneous *speaking*;—not for delivering a

written discourse with the effect of one that is actually extemporaneous. For it may be urged, that he who attempts *this*, must be, to a certain extent, an Actor: he may indeed really think, and strongly feel at the moment, all that he is saying; but though, thus far, no disguise is needed, he cannot, without a distinct effort, deliver what he is, in fact, reading, with the air of one who is *not* reading, but is framing each sentence as he delivers it; and to learn to do this, it may be said, practice is requisite; not such practice indeed as that of ordinary school-recitations, which has a directly contrary tendency; but such as *might* be adopted on the principles above laid down. And it must be admitted, (indeed the remark has been frequently made in the foregoing pages,) that the task of him who delivers a written discourse, is very different from that of the truly extemporary speaker, supposing the object be to produce at all a similar effect. For, as I have formerly observed, what has been here called the *Natural Delivery*, is that which is *natural to the real Speaker* alone; and it is by no means what will spontaneously suggest itself to one who has (even his own) written words before him. To attain the delivery I have been recommending, he must make a strong and continual effort so to withdraw his

mind, not only from studied modulation of voice, but from the consciousness that he is reading,—and so to absorb himself, as it were, not only in the general sentiments, but in each separate expression, as to make it thoroughly his own at the moment of utterance. And I am far from supposing that in doing this he will not improve by practice; indeed, I have all along implied, that no one can expect at once to attain perfection in it. But whether any such system of recitation as would afford beneficial practice could be adopted at schools, I am more doubtful. Supposing the established mode of spouting to be totally exploded, and every effort used to make a boy deliver a Speech of Cæsar, for instance, or Lear, in the natural manner, *i.e.* according to the *Masters'* view of what is natural,—still, the learner himself will be reciting in a manner, *to him*, wholly artificial; not merely because he is reading, or repeating from memory, what he is endeavouring to utter as if extempore;—nor again, merely because the composition is another's, and the circumstances fictitious; but because the composition, the situation, and the circumstances *could not* have been his own. A School-boy has *no* natural way of *his own* to express himself on the topics on which he is made to declaim; because, as yet these topics

form no part of the furniture of his mind. And thus the object proposed, viz., to qualify him for delivering well, on real occasions, his own, or such as his own, written compositions, will have been defeated; and we shall have anticipated, and corrupted, by a studied elocution; what would have been, in after life, his own natural mode of expressing himself on such occasions.

However serviceable practice may be, there is none, I think, that will not do more harm than good, except the practice of reciting, either on real occasions, or on such as one can fully conceive and enter into, expressions either actually his own, or at least *such* as he would naturally have uttered on the occasion. Should the School-boy be limited to the recitation of compositions of his own, or of a fellow-student, and that too, compositions not written as a task on a given subject, (on such subjects at least as are usually set for exercises,) (*w*) but on some real occasion interesting to a youthful mind, (*e. g.* of some recent occurrence, or the like,) a system of practice might perhaps be adopted which would prove beneficial.

Such exercises as these, however, would make but a sorry *display*, in comparison of the customary declamations. The "pomp and circum-

stance" of annual public recitations has much that is attractive to Masters, Parents, and Scholars; and it is easily believed, by those who wish to believe it, that for a boy who is destined hereafter to speak in public, the practice of making public speeches, and of taking great pains to deliver them well, must be a very beneficial exercise.

§ 3.

Natural
delivery
more easily
heard.

The last circumstance to be noticed among the results of the mode of delivery recommended is, that the speaker will find it much easier in this Natural manner, to *make himself heard*: he will be heard, that is much more distinctly—at a greater distance,—and with far less exertion and fatigue to himself. This is the more necessary to be mentioned, because it is a common, if not prevailing opinion, that the reverse of this is the fact. There are not a few who assign as a reason for their adoption of a certain unnatural tone and measured cadence, that it is necessary, in order to be heard by a large congregation. But though such an artificial voice and utterance will often appear to produce a *louder sound*, (which is the circumstance that probably deceives such persons,) yet a natural voice and delivery, provided it be clear, though it be less laboured, and

may even seem low to those who are near at hand, will be distinctly heard at a much greater distance. The only decisive proof of this must be sought in experience; which will not fail to convince of the truth of it any one who will fairly make the trial.

The requisite degree of loudness will be best obtained, conformably with the principles here inculcated, not by thinking about the voice, but by *looking* at the most *distant* of the hearers, and addressing one's self especially to him. The voice rises *spontaneously*, when we are speaking to a person who is not very near.

It should be added, that a speaker's being well heard does not depend near so much on the *loudness* of the sounds, as on their *distinctness*; and especially on the clear pronunciation of the *consonants*.

That the organs of voice are much less strained and fatigued by the natural action which takes place in real speaking, than by any other, (besides that it is what might be expected *a priori*,) is evident from daily experience. An extemporary Speaker will usually be much less exhausted in two hours, than an elaborate reciter (though less distinctly heard) will be in one. Even the ordinary tone of *reading* aloud is so much more fatiguing than that of conversation, that feeble

patients are frequently unable to continue it for a quarter of an hour without great exhaustion; even though they may feel no inconvenience from *talking*, with few or no pauses, and in no lower voice, for more than double that time (*x*)

§ 4.

Recapitulation of advantages and disadvantages.

He then who shall determine to aim at the Natural manner, though he will have to contend with considerable difficulties and discouragements, will not be without corresponding advantages, in the course he is pursuing.

He will be at first, indeed, repressed to a greater degree than another, by emotions of bashfulness; but it will be more speedily and more completely subdued; the very system pursued, since it forbids all thoughts of *self*, striking at the root of the evil.

He will, indeed, on the outset, incur censure, not only critical but moral;—he will be blamed for using a *colloquial* delivery; and the censure will very likely be, as far as relates to his earliest efforts, not wholly undeserved; for his manner *will* probably at first too much resemble that of conversation, though of serious and earnest conversation; but by perseverance he may be sure of avoiding deserved, and of mitigating, and ultimately overcoming undeserved censure.

He will, indeed, never be praised for a "very fine delivery," but his *matter* will not lose the approbation it may deserve, as he will be the more sure of being heard and attended to. He will not, indeed, meet with many who can be regarded as models of the Natural manner; and those he does meet with, he will be precluded, by the nature of the system, from minutely imitating; but he will have the advantage of carrying with him an *Infallible Guide*, as long as he is careful to follow the suggestions of Nature; abstaining from all thoughts respecting his own utterance, and fixing his mind intently on the business he is engaged in.

And though he must not expect to attain perfection at once, he may be assured that, while he steadily adheres to this plan, he is in the right road to it; instead of becoming,—as on the other plan,—more and more artificial, the longer he studies. And every advance he makes will produce a proportional effect: it will give him more and more of that hold on the attention, the understanding, and the feelings of the audience, which no studied modulation can ever attain. Others indeed may be more successful in escaping censure, and ensuring admiration; but he will far more surpass them, in respect of

the proper object of the Orator, which is, *to carry his point.*

§ 5.

Action.

Much need not be said on the subject of *Action*, which is at present so little approved, or designedly employed in this country, that it is hardly to be reckoned as any part of the Orator's art.

Action, however, seems to be natural to man, when speaking earnestly: but the state of the case at present seems to be, that the disgust excited, on the one hand, by awkward and ungraceful motions, and, on the other, by studied gesticulations, has led to the general disuse of action altogether; and has induced men to form the habit (for it certainly *is* a *formed* habit) of keeping themselves quite still, or nearly so, when speaking. This is supposed to be, and perhaps is, the more rational and dignified way of speaking: but so strong is the tendency to indicate vehement internal emotion by some kind of outward gesture, that those who do not encourage or allow themselves any, frequently fall unconsciously into some awkward trick of swinging the body, (*y*) folding a paper, twisting a string, or the like. But when any one is read-

ing, or even speaking, in the Artificial manner, there is little or nothing of this tendency; precisely because the mind is *not* occupied by that strong internal emotion which occasions it. And the prevalence of this (the artificial) manner may reasonably be conjectured to have led to the disuse of all gesticulation, even in extemporary speakers; because if any one, whose delivery is artificial, does use action, it will of course be like his voice, studied and artificial; and savouring still more of disgusting affectation; from the circumstance that it evidently might be entirely omitted. And hence, the practice came to be generally disapproved and exploded.

Why action
is generally
disused.

It need only be observed, that, in conformity with the principles maintained throughout this Treatise, no *care* should, in any case, be taken to use graceful or appropriate action; which, if not perfectly unstudied, will always be (as has been just remarked) intolerable. But if any one spontaneously falls into any gestures that are unbecoming, care should *then* be taken to break the habit; and that, not only in public speaking, but on all occasions. The case, indeed, is the same with utterance: if any one has, in common discourse, an indistinct, hesitating, provincial, or otherwise faulty delivery, *his* Natural manner certainly is not what he should

adopt in public speaking; but he should endeavour, by care, to remedy the defect, not in public speaking only, but in ordinary conversation also. And so also, with respect to attitudes and gestures. It is in these points, principally, if not exclusively, that the remarks of an intelligent friend will be beneficial.

If, again, any one finds himself naturally and spontaneously led to use, in speaking, a moderate degree of action, which he finds from the observation of others not to be ungraceful or inappropriate, there is no reason that he should study to repress this tendency.

§ 6.

Action
naturally
precedes the
words.

It would be inconsistent with the principle just laid down, to deliver any *precepts* for gesture: because the *observance* of even the best conceivable precepts, would, by destroying the natural appearance, be fatal to their object: but there is a *remark*, which is worthy of attention, from the illustration it affords of the erroneousness, in detail, as well as in principle, of the ordinary systems of instruction in this point. Boys are generally taught to employ the prescribed action either *after*, or *during* the utterance of the words it is to enforce. The best and most appropriate action must, from this circumstance alone, neces-

sarily appear a feeble affectation. It suggests the idea of a person speaking to those who do not fully understand the language, and striving by signs to explain the meaning of what he has been saying. The very same gesture, had it come at the proper, that is, the *natural* point of time, might, perhaps, have added greatly to the effect; viz., had it *preceded* somewhat the utterance of the words. *That* is always the natural order of action. An emotion, struggling for utterance, produces a tendency to a bodily gesture, to express that emotion more *quickly* than words can be framed; the words follow, as soon as they *can* be spoken. And this being always the case with a real, earnest, unstudied speaker, this mode of placing the action foremost, gives (if it be otherwise appropriate) the appearance of earnest emotion actually present in the mind. And the reverse of this natural order would alone be sufficient to convert the action of Demosthenes himself into unsuccessful and ridiculous pantomime.

*"Format enim Natura prius nos intus ad omnem
Fortunarum habitum; juvat, aut impellit ad iram:
Aut ad humum mærore gravi deducit, et angit:
Post effert animi motus interprete lingua."*

HORACE, *Ars Poet.*

NOTES.

(a) *Apophos to "Spouting Proper."*—There is a not uncommon style of Oratory—on which Bishop Copplestone remarks—where the spouter bursts forth magniloquently, launching on his career with the flashy temerity of a second Phaëton; but alas! in the maze of verbiage loosing but too speedily, the clue of his ideas—he tumbles precipitately into common-place—*e. g.*, our orator commences—"When I cast an eye over the complex—varied variegated masses of Society—When I contemplate mankind from 'China to Peru'—When I mentally survey the moral phases of humanity, from the untaught savage to the polished child of highly cultivated civilisation—me-thinks one finds one unvarying principle through all—one chain, if I may so express myself—one link—that is, I mean to say, one law—that is—in other words—to say—to say I mean—that everybody endeavours to take care of number one!"

Who has not seen a paper kite,
I'll'd by the string, commence its flight?
It waves its tail, it flaps its wings,
And soaring graceful, upward springs,
So Smallworth speaks; his periods rise,
And mount majestic toward the skies.
But as the paper kite foresaid,
If 'tis too heavy in the head,
Soon throws a somerset most scurvy,
And pitches downwards topsy turvy,
So Smallworth's periods, (hapless fate!)
Fall in their flight, thro' too much weight;
He blunders, hesitates, and stops,
Repeats, corrects, and down he drops!

Pertinent to the above, Martinus Scriblerus makes a shrewd remark—in this "Art of the Bathos"—"Many there are that can fall, but few arrive at the felicity of falling gracefully."

(b) It may be said, indeed, that even tolerable Reading aloud, supplies more than is exhibited by a book to the eye; since though italics, *e.g.* indicate which word is to receive the emphasis, they do not point out the *tone* in which it is to be pronounced; which may be essential even to the right understanding of the sentence. *E.G.* in such a sentence as in Genesis 1. "God said, Let there be light; and there *was* light:" here we can indicate indeed to the eye that the stress is to be upon "*was*;" but it may be pronounced in different tones; one of which would alter the sense, by implying that there *was* light *already*.

This is true indeed; and it is also true, that the very words themselves are not always presented to the eye with the same distinctions as are to be conveyed to the ear; as, *e.g.* "abuse," "refuse," "project," and many others, are pronounced differently, as nouns and as verbs. This ambiguity, however, in our written signs, as well as the other, relative to the emphatic words, are imperfections which will not mislead a moderately practised reader. My meaning, in saying that such Reading as I am speaking of puts the hearers in the same situation as if the book were before them, is to be understood on the supposition of their being able not only to read, but to read so as to take in the full sense of what is written.

(c) "At every sentence let them ask themselves this question; How should I utter this, were I *speaking* it as my own immediate sentiments?—I have often tried an experiment to show the great difference between these two modes of utterance, the natural and the artificial; which was, that when I found a person of vivacity delivering his sentiments with energy, and of course with all that variety of tones which nature furnishes, I have taken occasion to put something into his hand to read, as relative to the topic of conversation; and it was surprising to see what an immediate change there was in his delivery, from the moment he began to read. A different pitch of voice took place of his natural one, and a tedious uniformity of cadence succeeded to a spirited variety; insomuch, that a blind man could hardly conceive the person who read to be the same who had just been speaking."—SHERIDAN, *Art of Reading*.

(d) Were I to attempt to discriminate between Dancing and any other kind of movement, I should observe, that though in performing any ordinary action,—in walking, for example,

across the room. a person may manifest both grace and agility, yet if he betrays the least intention of showing either, he is sure of offending more or less, and we never fail to accuse him of some degree of vanity and affectation. In the performance of any such ordinary action, every one wishes to appear to be solely occupied about the proper purpose of the action; if he means to show either grace or agility, he is careful to conceal that meaning; and in proportion as he betrays it, which he almost always does, he offends. In Dancing, on the contrary, every one professes and avows, as it were, the intention of displaying some degree either of grace or of agility, or of both. The display of one or other, or both of these qualities, is, in reality, the proper purpose of the action; and there can never be any disagreeable vanity or affectation in following out the proper purpose of any action. When we say of any particular person, that he gives himself many affected airs and graces in Dancing, we mean either that he exhibits airs and graces unsuitable to the nature of the Dance, or that he exaggerates those which are suitable. Every Dance is, in reality, a succession of airs and graces of some kind or other, which, if I may say so, profess themselves to be such. The steps, gestures, and motions which, as it were, avow the intention of exhibiting a succession of such airs and graces, are the steps, gestures, and motions which are peculiar to Dancing. . . . The distinction between the sounds or tones of Singing, and those of Speaking, seems to be of the same kind with that between the steps, &c., of Dancing, and those of any other ordinary action. Though in Speaking a person may show a very agreeable tone of voice, yet if he seems to intend to show it,—if he appears to listen to the sound of his own voice, and as it were to tune it into a pleasing modulation, he never fails to offend, as guilty of a most disagreeable affectation. In Speaking, as in every other ordinary action, we expect and require that the speaker should attend only to the proper purpose of the action,—the clear and distinct expression of what he has to say. In Singing, on the contrary, every one professes the intention to please by the tone and cadence of his voice; and he not only appears to be guilty of no disagreeable affectation in doing so, but we expect and require that he should do so. To please by Choice and Arrangement of agreeable sounds, is the proper purpose of all music, vocal as well as instrumental; and we always expect that every one should attend to the proper purpose of whatever action

he is performing. A person may appear to sing, as well as to dance, affectedly; he may endeavour to please by sounds and tones which are unsuitable to the nature of the song, or he may dwell too much on those which are suitable to it. The disagreeable affectation appears to consist always, not in attempting to please by a proper, but by some improper modulation of the voice.—Dr. A. SMITH'S *Essay on the Imitative Arts*.

(e) Style occupies in some respects an intermediate place between these two.

(f) See note, (b). It is to be observed, however, that most of the objections I have adduced do not apply to this or that system in particular; to Sheridan's, for instance, as distinguished from Walker's; but to *all* such systems generally; as may be seen from what is said in the present section.

(g) "For the benefit of those who are desirous of getting over their bad habits, and discharging that important part of the sacred office, the Reading the Liturgy with due decorum, I shall first enter into a minute examination of some parts of the Service, and afterwards deliver the rest accompanied by such marks as will enable the reader, in a short time, and with moderate pains, to make himself master of the whole.

"But first it will be necessary to explain the marks which you will hereafter see throughout the rest of this course. They are of two kinds; one, to point out the emphatic words, for which I shall use the Grave accent of the Greek ['].

"The other to point out the different pauses or stops, for which I shall use the following marks:

"For the shortest pause, marking an incomplete line, thus'.

"For the second, double the time of the former, two".

"And for the third or full stop, three"".

"When I would mark a pause longer than any belonging to the usual stops, it shall be by two horizontal lines, as thus=.

"When I would point out a syllable that is to be dwelt on some time, I shall use this —, or a short horizontal over the Syllable.

"When a syllable should be rapidly uttered, thus \sim , or a curve turned upwards; the usual marks of long and short in Prosody.

"The Exhortation I have often heard delivered in the following manner:

"'Dearly beloved brethren, the Scripture moveth us in sundry places to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness. And that we should not dissemble nor cloke them before the face of Almighty God our Heavenly Father, but confess them with an humble lowly penitent and obedient heart, to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same, by his infinite goodness and mercy. And although we ought at all times humbly to acknowledge our sins before God, yet ought we most chiefly so to do, when we assemble and meet together. To render thanks for the great benefits we have received at his hands, to set forth his most worthy praise, to hear his most holy word, and to ask those things that are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul. Wherefore I pray and beseech you, as many as are here present, to accompany me with a pure heart and humble voice to the throne of the heavenly grace, saying after me.'

"In the latter part of the first period, 'but confess them with an humble lowly penitent and obedient heart, to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same, by his infinite goodness and mercy,' there are several faults committed. In the first place the four epithets preceding the word 'heart,' are huddled together, and pronounced in a monotone, disagreeable to the ear, and enervating to the sense; whereas each word, rising in force above each other, ought to be marked by a proportional rising of the notes in the voice; and, in the last, there should be such a note used as would declare it at the same time to be the last—'with an humble lowly' penitent and obedient heart,' &c. At first view it may appear, that the words 'humble' and 'lowly' are synonymous; but the word 'lowly' certainly implies a greater degree of humiliation than the word 'humble'. The word 'penitent' that follows, is of stronger import than either; and the word 'obedient,' signifying a perfect resignation to the will of God, in consequence of our humiliation and repentance, furnishes the climax. But if the climax in the words be not accompanied by a suitable climax in the notes of the voice, it cannot be made manifest. In the following part of the sentence, 'to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same,' there are usually three

emphases laid on the words, *end, obtain, same*, where there should not be any, and the only emphatic word, *forgiveness*, is slightly passed over; whereas it should be read—"to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same", keeping the words, *obtain* and *forgiveness* closely together, and not disuniting them, both to the prejudice of the Sense and Cadence, &c., &c.

"I shall now read the whole in the manner I have recommended; and if you will give attention to the marks, you will be reminded of the manner, when you come to practise in your private reading. 'Dearly beloved brethren!—The Scripture moveth us' in sundry places' to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness, and that we should not dissemble nor cloke them' before the face of Almighty God' our Heavenly Father' but confess them' with an humble' lowly penitent' and obedient heart' to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same' by his infinite goodness and mercy". And although we ought at all times humbly to acknowledge our sins before God" yet ought we most chiefly so to do when we assemble and meet together' to render thanks' for the great benefits we have received at his hands" to set forth' his most worthy praise" to hear' his most holy word' and to ask those things' which are requisite and necessary' as well for the body as the soul". Wherefore I pray and beseech you as many as are here present' to accompany me' with a pure heart' and humble voice' to the throne of the heavenly grace, saying,' &c."—SHERIDAN, *Art of Reading Prose*.

The generality of the remarks respecting the way in which each passage of the Liturgy should be read, are correct; though the mode recommended for attaining the proposed end is totally different from what is suggested in the present treatise. In some points, however, the author is mistaken as to the emphatic words: e. g. in the Lord's Prayer, he directs the following passage to be read thus; "thy will' be doné on earth' as it is' in heaven," with the emphasis on the words "be" and "is;" these, however, are not the emphatic words, and do not even *exist in the original Greek*, but are supplied by the translator; the latter of them might, indeed, be omitted altogether without any detriment to the sense; "thy will be done as is in heaven, so also on earth," which is a more literal translation, is perfectly intelligible.

• A passage again, in the Second Commandment, he directs to be read, according indeed to the usual mode both of

reading and pointing it,—“visit the sins of the fathers’ upon the children’ unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;” which mode of reading destroys the sense, by making a pause at “children,” and none at “generation;” for this implies that the third and fourth generations, who suffer these judgments, are *themselves* such as hate the Lord, instead of being merely, as is meant to be expressed, the *children* of such. “*Of* them that hate me,” is a genitive governed not by “generation,” but by “children.” The passage should therefore be read (according to Sheridan’s marks) “visit the sins of the fathers’ upon the children unto the third and fourth generation’ of them that hate me:” i. e. visit the sins of the fathers who hate me, upon the third and fourth generations of their descendants.

The same sanction is given to an equally common fault in reading the fifth commandment; “that thy days may be long in the land’ which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” The pause should evidently be at “*long*,” not at “*land*.” No one would say in ordinary conversation, “I hope you will find enjoyment in the garden’ — which you have planted.” He has also strangely omitted an emphasis on the word “covet,” in the Tenth Commandment. He has, however, in the negative or prohibitory commands avoided the common fault of accenting the word “*not*.”*

And here it may be worth while to remark, that in some cases the Copula ought to be made the emphatic word; (i. e. the “*is*,” if the proposition be affirmative, the “*not*,” if negative;) viz. where the proposition may be considered as in opposition to its *contradictory*.† If, e. g. it had been a question *whether* we ought to steal or not, the commandment, in answer to that, would have been rightly pronounced, “thou shalt *not* steal:” but the question being, *what* things we are forbidden to do, the answer is, that “to steal” is one of them, “thou shalt *not* steal.” In such a case as this, the proposition is considered as opposed, not to its *contradictory*, but to one with a *different Predicate*: the question being, not, *which Copula* (negative or affirmative) shall be employed, but *what* shall be affirmed or denied

* Dr Johnson, in Boswell’s Life, is recorded to have sanctioned this fault, in respect at least of the Ninth Commandment.

Nor is this properly an exception to the above rule; for, in such cases, that which is expressed as the Copula, *is*, in sense, the Predicate; the question being in fact whether “true” or “false” shall be predicated of a certain assertion.

of the subject: *e. g.* "it is lawful to *beg* ; but not to *steal* ;" in such a case, the *Predicate*, not the *Copula*, will be the emphatic word.

One fault worth noticing on account of its commonness is the placing of the emphasis on "*neighbour*" in the Ninth and Tenth Commandments ; as if there might be some persons precluded from the benefit of the prohibitions. One would think the man to whom our Lord addressed the parable of the good Samaritan, had been used to this mode of delivery, by his asking, "and who is my *neighbour* ?"*

The usual pronounciation of one part of the "Apostles' Creed" is probably founded on some misapprehension of the sense of it:† "The Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints," is commonly read as if these were two distinct articles ; instead of the latter clause being merely an explanation of the former: "The Holy Catholic Church, [viz.] the Communion of Saints."

(*h*) And even in Music, the Notation, though so much more complete than any that could be adapted to Speaking, yet leaves much to be supplied by the intelligence, taste, and feeling of the performer.

(*j*) "*Qu'est ce que vous faites quand vous prononcez O ? Muis, je dis, O !*"—an answer, which, if not savouring of Philosophical analysis, gave at least a good practical solution of the problem.

(*k*) Who, for instance, that was really *thinking* of a resurrection from the dead, would ever tell any one that our Lord "*rose again from the dead* ;" (which is so common a mode of reading the Creed,) as if He had done so more than once?

It is to be observed, however, that it is not enough for a reader to have his mind fixed on the *subject* ; without regard to the *occasion*, &c. It is possible to *read* a prayer well, with the tone and manner of a man who is not *praying*, i. e. addressing the Deity, but addressing the *audience*, and *reciting* a form of words for their instruction : and such is generally the case with those who are commended as "fine

* I have heard again of some persons among the lower orders who, practically, lay the stress on "against;" thinking it allowable to give false evidence in one's *favour*.

† See Sir Peter (afterwards Lord) King's *History of the Apostles' Creed* ; a work much more valuable (in proportion to its size) than most that are studied by theologians.

readers" of the Liturgy. Extemporaneous prayers again are generally delivered, with spirit indeed, but (after the first few sentences) not *as* prayers, but as *exhortations* to the congregation.

(1) A useful maxim as to this point is, to "take care of the consonants, and the vowels will take care of themselves."

(m) "It need hardly be observed how important it is, with a view to these objects," (the training of children in sound and practical religious knowledge) "to abstain carefully from the practice, still too prevalent, though much less so, we believe, than formerly, of compelling, or encouraging, or even allowing children to *learn by rote*, forms of prayer, catechisms, hymns, or in short anything connected with morality and religion, when they attach no meaning to the words they utter.

"It is done on the plea that they will *hereafter* learn the meaning of what they have been thus taught, and will be able to make a practical use of it. But no attempt at economy of time can be more injudicious. Let any child, whose capacity is so far matured as to enable him to comprehend an explanation *e. g.* of the Lord's Prayer, have it *then* put before him for the first time, and when he is made acquainted with the meaning of it, set to learn it by heart; and can any one doubt that in less than half a day's application, he would be able to repeat it fluently? And the same would be the case with other forms. All that is learnt by rote by a child before he is competent to attach a meaning to the words he utters, would not, if all put together, amount to so much as would cost him, when able to understand it, a week's labour, to learn perfectly. But it may cost the toil—often the vain toil—of many years, to unlearn the habit of *formalism*; of repeating words by rote without attending to their meaning: a habit which every one conversant with education knows to be, in all subjects most readily acquired by children, and with difficulty avoided, even with the utmost care of the teacher; but which such a plan must inevitably tend to generate.

"It is often said, and very truly, that it is important to form early habits of piety; but to train a child in one kind of habit, is not the most likely way of forming the *opposite* habit; and nothing can be more contrary to true piety than the superstition (for such in fact it is) of attaching efficacy

to the repetition of a certain form of words, as of a charm, independent of the understanding and of the heart.*

"It is also said, with equal truth, that we ought to take advantage of the facility which children possess of learning words: but to infer from thence, that Providence designs us to make such a use (or rather abuse) of this gift, as we have been censuring, is as if we were to take advantage of the readiness with which a new-born babe swallows whatever is put into its mouth, to dose it with ardent spirits, instead of wholesome food and necessary medicine. The readiness with which children learn and remember words, is in truth a most important advantage, if rightly employed; viz. if applied to the acquiring of that mass of what may be called *arbitrary* knowledge of insulated facts, which can only be acquired and retained by a mere act of memory, and which is necessary in after life; when the acquisition of it would both be more troublesome, and would encroach on time that might otherwise be better employed. Chronology, names of countries, weights and measures, and indeed all the *words* of any language, are of this description. If a child had even ten times the ordinary degree of the faculty in ques-

"* We have spoken with so much commendation of the 'Hints on Early Education' [Mrs. Hoare's], that we feel bound to notice incidentally a point in which we think the author, if not herself mistaken, is likely to lead her readers into a mistake. 'PUBLIC WORSHIP. Silence,' says the author, 'self-subjection, and a serious deportment, both in family and public worship, ought to be strictly enforced in early life; and it is better that children should not attend, till they are capable of behaving in a proper manner. But a practical regard for the Sabbath, and for the services of religion, is but an effect of that reverence for *everything sacred* which it is of primary importance early to establish as a *habit* of mind.'—pp. 172-173.

"Now if 'reverence for things sacred' be the only habit we wish to implant, the caution here given is sufficient: but if we would form in the child the much more important habit of hearty devotion, as distinguished from superstitious formalism, we should wait for his being not only 'capable of behaving' with outward decorum, but also of understanding and joining in the Service.

"We would also deprecate, by the way, the practice (which this writer seems to countenance, though without any express inculcation) of strictly prohibiting children from indulging in their usual sports on the Lord's Day; which has a manifest tendency to associate with that festival, ideas of gloom and restraint; and also to generate the too common notion that God requires of us *only one* day in seven, and that scrupulous privation on that day will afford licence for the rest of the week. We are speaking, be it observed, of the *Christian* festival of the Lord's Day. Those who think themselves bound by the precepts of the Old Testament relative to the Sabbath, should remember that Saturday is the day to which those precepts apply."

tion, a judicious teacher would find abundance of useful employment for it, without resorting to any that could possibly be detrimental to his future habits, moral, religious, or intellectual."—*London Review*, 1829, No. II. Art. V. "Juvenile Library," pp. 412, 413.

(n) Practice in public speaking generally—practice in speaking on the particular subject in hand—and (on each occasion) premeditation on the matter, and arrangement are all circumstances of great consequence to a speaker.

Nothing but a *miraculous gift* can supersede these advantages. The Apostles, accordingly, were forbidden to *use any premeditation*, being assured that it "should be *given* them, in that same hour, what they should say;" and when they found, in effect, this promise fulfilled to them, they had experience, within themselves, of a sensible miracle.

(o) The question between preaching extempore and from a written discourse, it does not properly fall within the province of this treatise to discuss on any but what may be called rhetoric principles. It may be worth while however to remark, incidentally, that one who possesses the power of preparing and arranging his matter, and retaining it in his memory, and expressing it fluently in well-chosen language, extempore,—in short, who is qualified to produce the best effects of this kind of preaching,—should remember, as a set-off against its advantages, that he may be holding out an *example* and encouragement to others who are *not* thus qualified. He may, perhaps, find himself cited as *approving* of extemporary preaching, and appealed to as an authority, and imitated by those who perhaps resemble him *only* in fluency, and who, by not merely speaking extempore, but also *thinking* extempore, leave some of their hearers disgusted, and the rest unedified.

(p) Hence it is that *shy* persons are, as is matter of common remark, the more distressed by this infirmity when in company with those who are subject to the same.

(q) It may be remarked, by way of corollary from what has been here said, how injudicious is the method commonly employed by those who wish to cure a young person of Bashfulness. To tell him incessantly of the *unfavourable impression* it creates,—the *ridicule* to which it exposes him, &c., and exhort him to try to make a better *appearance*, &c., all

which is pouring oil on the fire which we are seeking to quench. If they could induce him (pursuing just the opposite course) to think *less* of the appearance he makes, and not to be occupied with the idea of what others are thinking of him, they would be administering the specific remedy for the disease.

(r) When however it is said that a good and wise man often has to act the part of an orator towards himself, in respect of that very point—the excitement of the Feelings—which in many minds is the most associated with the idea of dishonest artifice, it must not be forgotten that a man is in danger—the more, in proportion to his abilities—of exercising on himself, when under the influence of some passion, a most pernicious oratorical power, by pleading the cause as it were, before himself, of that passion. Suppose it anger, *e. g.* that he is feeling: he is naturally disposed to dwell on and amplify the aggravating circumstances of the supposed provocation, so as to make out a good case for himself; a representation such as may—or might, if needed—serve to vindicate him in the eyes of a bystander, and to give him the advantage in a controversy. This of course tends to *heighten* his resentment, and to satisfy him that he “doth well to be angry;” or perhaps to persuade him that he is *not* angry, but is a model of patience under intolerable wrongs. And the man of *superior ingenuity* and eloquence will do this more skilfully than an ordinary man, and will thence be likely to be the more effectually self-deceived: for although he may be superior to the other in judgment, as well as in ingenuity, it is to be remembered that while his *judgment* is likely to be, in his own cause, biassed, and partially blinded, his *ingenuity* is called forth to the utmost.

And the like takes place, if it be selfish cupidity, unjust partiality in favour of a relative or friend, party-spirit, or any other passion that may be operating. For, universally, men are but too apt to take more pains in justifying their propensities, than it would cost to control them. And a man of superior powers will often be in this way entrapped by his own ingenuity, like a spider entangled in the web she has herself spun. Most persons are fearful, even to excess, of being misled by the eloquence of another: but an ingenious reasoner ought to be especially fearful of his own. There is no one whom he is likely so much, and so hurtfully, to mislead as himself, if he be not sedulously on his guard against this self-deceit.

(s) It is not meant by this that an extemporary *speaker* necessarily *composes* (in respect of his matter) extempore, or that he professes to do so; but only that if he *frames each sentence* at the moment, he must, at that moment, have the sentiment which is expressed in it strongly present to his mind.

(t) I, myself, always find it best so to draw up the notes, as not to have any *sentence* in the words in which it is to be delivered, but like an index or table of contents.

(u) Some have used the expression of “a *conscious manner*,” to denote that which results (either in conversation,—in the ordinary actions of life,—or in public speaking) from the anxious attention which some persons feel to the opinion the company may form of them; a *consciousness* of being watched and scrutinized in every word and gesture, together with an extreme anxiety for approbation, and dread of censure.

(v) If there are any, as I must hope there are not a few, who would deprecate such a result from the acting of Terence’s plays by school-boys, and who yet patronize the practice, I cannot but express my unfeigned wonder at their doing so. Can they doubt that *some* effect is likely to be produced on a young and unformed mind, forwarder in passions than in reason, by—not *reading* merely—not *learning by heart* merely—but studying as an *actor*, and striving to deliver *with effect*, the part of an accomplished debauchee? And this too, such a character as Terence’s poetical justice never fails to crown with success and applause. The foulest obscenity, such as would create disgust in any delicate mind, would probably be less likely to corrupt the principles, than the more gentleman-like profligacy, which is not merely represented, but recommended in Terence; and which approaches but too nearly to what the youth may find exemplified in some persons among the higher classes in this country.

Will it be answered, that because the same boys are taught to say their catechism—are sent to Chapel—and are given to understand that they are not to take Pamphilus as a model, a sufficient safeguard is thus provided, against the effects of an assiduous effort to gain applause by a lively and spirited representation of such a character? I can only reply, in the words of Thucydides, “We give you joy of

your innocence, but covet not your silliness;"—ΜΑΚΑΡΙ-
ΣΑΝΤΕΣ ΤΜΩΝ ΤΟ ΑΠΕΙΡΟΚΑΚΟΝ, ΟΥ ΖΗΛ-
ΟΥΜΕΝ ΤΟ ΑΦΡΟΝ.

I am aware that I run a risk of giving offence by these remarks; but a sense of duty forbids their suppression. If the practice is capable of vindication, let it receive one; if not, let it be abolished.

It is now (1854,) a good many years since this remonstrance was first published; during which interval the work has gone through several editions. I cannot but suppose, therefore, that some refutation of my reasoning would, before now, have been at least attempted, (which as far as I know, no one ever did attempt,) were it not felt and practically acknowledged by the parties concerned to be *unanswerable*.

Let the experiment be tried, of placing in the hands of the MOTHERS of the boys, when they come to witness the exhibition, a close *translation* of the play their sons are acting. I will be satisfied to abide by the decision of the right-minded and judicious among them.

(*w*) The chief reason probably for the existing prejudice against technical systems of composition, is to be found in the cramped, meagre, and feeble character of most of such essays, &c., as are *avowedly* composed according to the rules of any such system.

But the circumstance which has mainly tended to produce the complaint alluded to is, that in this case, the reverse takes place in the plan pursued in the learning of other arts; in which it is usual to begin for the sake of practice, with what is *easiest*: here, on the contrary, the tyro has usually a *harder* task assigned him, and one in which he is less likely to succeed, than he will meet with in the actual business of life. For it is undeniable that it is much the most difficult to find either propositions to maintain, or arguments to prove them—to know, in short, what to say, or how to say it—on any subject on which one has hardly any information, and no interest; about which he knows little, and cares still less.

Now the subjects usually proposed for School or College exercises are (to the learners themselves) precisely of this description. And hence it commonly happens, that an exercise composed with diligent care by a young student, though it will have cost him far more pains than a *real* letter

written by him to his friends, on subjects that interest him, will be very greatly inferior to it. On the *real occasions* of after life (I mean, when the object proposed is, not to fill up a sheet, a book, or an hour, but to communicate his thoughts, to convince, or persuade)—on these real occasions, for which such exercises were designed to prepare him, he will find that he writes both better, and with more facility, than on the *artificial* occasion, as it may be called, of composing a Declamation;—that he has been attempting to learn the easier, by practising the harder.

But what is worse, it will often happen that such exercises will have formed a habit of stringing together empty common-places, and vapid declamations,—of multiplying words and spreading out the matter thin,—of composing in a stiff, artificial, and frigid manner: and that this habit will more or less cling through life to one who has been thus trained, and will infect all his future compositions.

The obvious and the only preventive of the evils which I have been speaking of is, a most scrupulous care in the selection of such *subjects* for exercises as are likely to be *interesting* to the student, and on which he has (or may, with pleasure, and without much toil, acquire) sufficient information. Such subjects will of course vary, according to the learner's age and intellectual advancement; but they had better be rather below, than much above him; that is, they should never be such as to induce him to string together vague general expressions, conveying no distinct ideas to his own mind, and second-hand sentiments which he does not feel. He may freely transplant indeed from other writers such thoughts as will take root in the soil of his own mind; but he must never be tempted to collect *dried specimens*. He must also be encouraged to express himself (in correct language indeed, but) in a free, natural, and simple style; which of course implies (considering who and what the writer is supposed to be) such a style as, in itself, would be open to severe criticism, and certainly very unfit to appear in a book.

Compositions on such subjects, and in such a style, would probably be regarded with a disdainful eye, as puerile, by those accustomed to the opposite mode of teaching. But it should be remembered that the compositions of boys *must* be puerile, in one way or the other: and to a person of unsophisticated and sound taste, the truly contemptible kind of puerility would be found in the other kind of exercises. Look at the letter of an intelligent youth to one of his com-

panions, communicating intelligence of such petty matters, as are interesting to both—describing the scenes he has visited, and the recreations he has enjoyed during a vacation; and you will see a picture of the youth himself—boyish indeed in looks and stature—in dress and in demeanour; but lively, unfettered, natural, giving a fair promise for manhood, and, in short, what a boy should be. Look at a theme composed by the same youth, on "*Virtus est medium vitiorum*," or "*Natura beatis omnibus esse dedit*," and you will see a picture of the same boy, dressed up in the garb, and absurdly aping the demeanour of an elderly man. Our ancestors (and still more recently, I believe, the continental nations,) were guilty of the absurdity of dressing up children in wigs, swords, huge buckles, hoops, ruffles, and all the elaborate full-dressed finery of grown-up people of that day. It is surely reasonable that the analogous absurdity in greater matters, also,—among the rest in that part of education I am speaking of,—should be laid aside; and that we should in all points consider what is appropriate to each different period of life.

The subjects for Composition to be selected on the principle I am recommending, will generally fall under one of three classes: *first*, subjects drawn from the studies the learner is engaged in; relating, for instance to the characters or incidents of any history he may be reading; and sometimes, perhaps, leading him to forestall by conjecture, something which he will hereafter come to in the book itself; *secondly*, subjects drawn from any conversation he may have listened to (*with interest*) from his seniors, whether addressed to himself, or between each other: or *thirdly*, relating to the amusements, familiar occurrences, and everyday transactions, which are likely to have formed the topics of easy conversation among his family friends. The student should not be confined exclusively to any of these three classes of subjects. They should be intermingled in as much variety as possible. And the teacher should frequently recall to his own mind these two considerations: *first*, that since the benefit proposed does not consist in the intrinsic value of the composition, but in the *exercise* to the pupil's mind, it matters not how insignificant the subject may be, if it will but interest him, and thereby afford him such exercise; *secondly*, that the younger and backward each student is, the more unfit he will be for *abstract* speculations; and the less remote must be the subjects proposed from those *individual* objects and occurrences which always

form the first beginnings of the furniture of the youthful mind.

(x) "We can at will enlarge or diminish the area of the chest, and stop, accelerate, or retard the act of respiration. When we attend to our breathing, and regulate its rate, it quickly becomes fatiguing; but the same happens with any voluntary and habitual action, if we attempt to perform it analytically, *by directing the attention to every step in its progress.*"—*MAVO'S Physiology*, p. 107.

It may be added that there is a disease of the larynx to which those professionally engaged in reading aloud are often subject, but which, as I have learnt from medical men, is seldom or never found among Pleaders and other extemporary speakers.

(y) Of one of the ancient Roman Orators it was satirically remarked, (on account of his having this habit,) that he must have learned to speak *in a boat*. Of some other Orators, whose favorite action is rising on tiptoe, it would be said, that they had been accustomed to address their audience *over a high wall*.

THE END.



